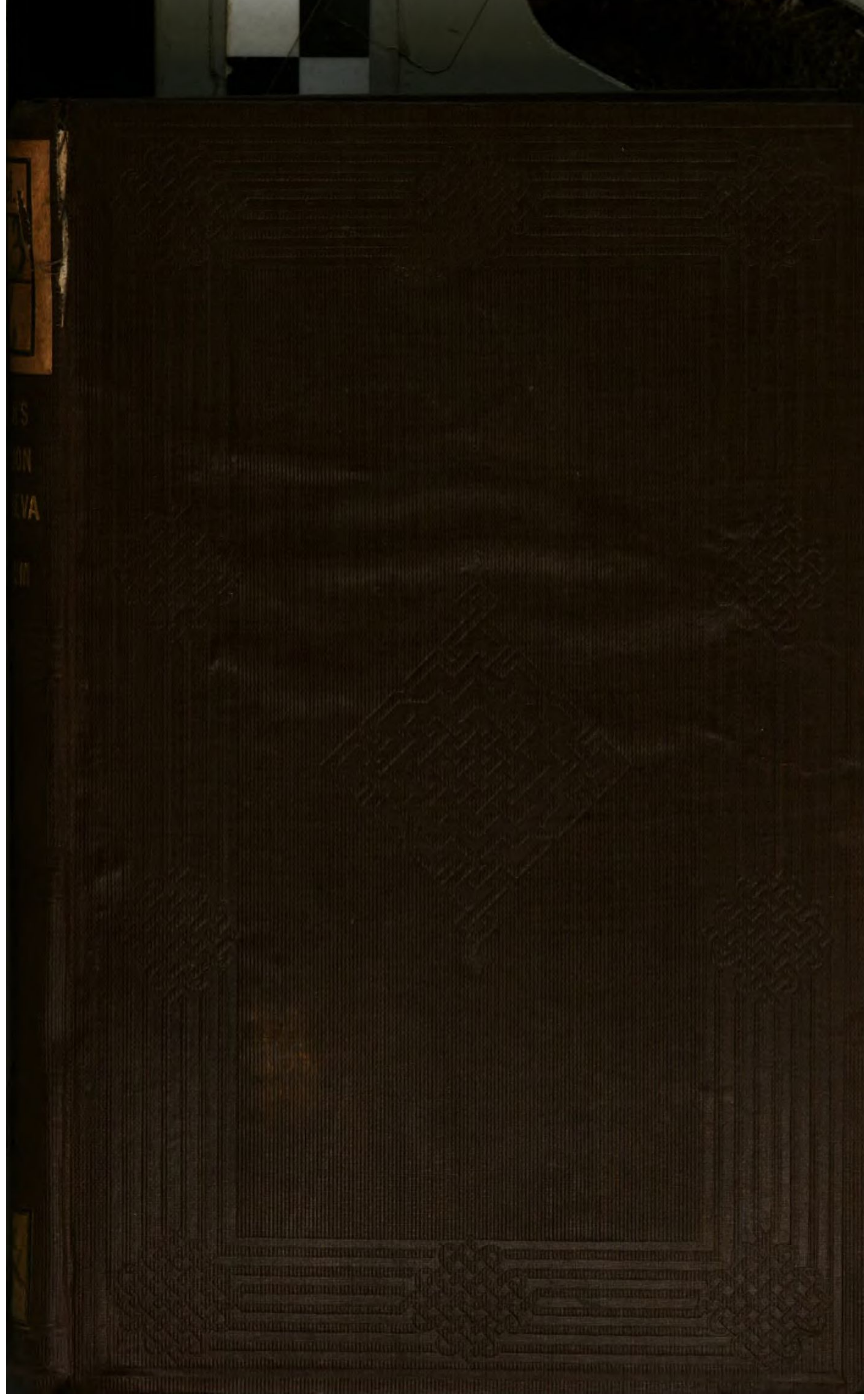




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NOTICES

THE STATE OF RELIGION

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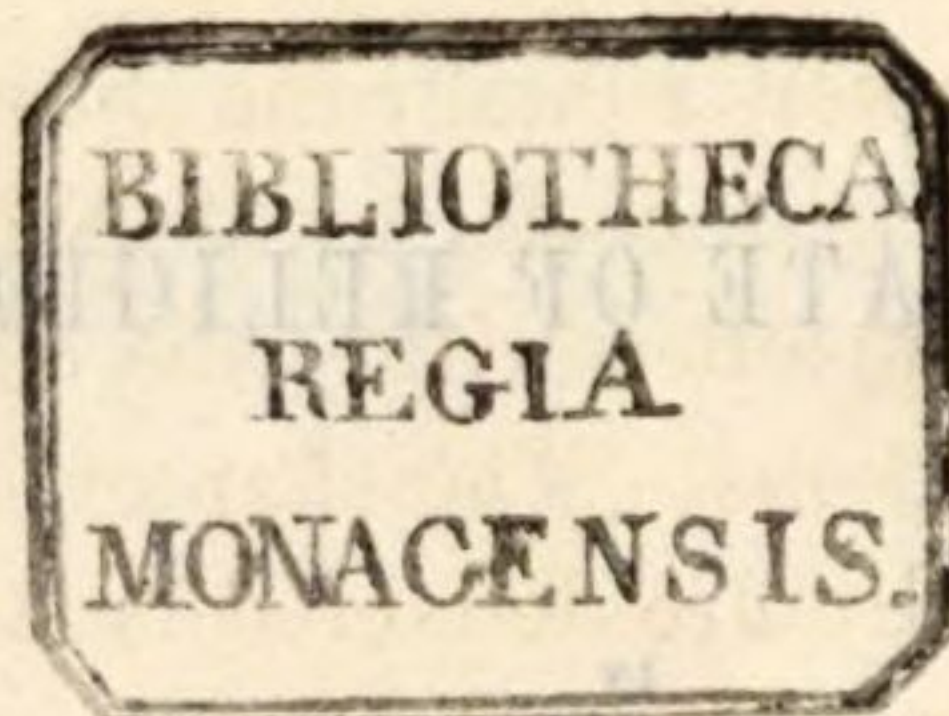
IN

GENEVA AND BELGIUM.

BY H. HUGH, D.D.

GLASGOW

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GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY BELL AND BAIN, ST. ENOCH SQUARE.

BY H. HENCH, D.D.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAMS WATKINS, 83 BUCHANAN STREET.

MDCCCXXV.

PREFACE.

THE following chapters contain the substance of six Addresses, delivered in the course of November and December last, accompanied with some modifications, and considerable additions. The chapter on Belgium is the substance of a lecture delivered in April last, in Edinburgh, at the request of the Continental Society of that city. All the subjects treated would have admitted of much enlargement; but I was desirous of presenting them in a form as condensed as their importance would allow.

I am unable to account for the fact, that the religious condition of the European continent, and its claims on the zealous interest of Christians in this country, attract the regard of the friends of evangelical religion to so small a degree, *comparatively*, as they seem to have done hitherto. Far from me be the wish to abate exertion for the diffusion of the light of the Gospel over these populous regions, in the East, in the West, and in the South, which Divine Providence has subjected to the empire of Britain, or in any other quarter of the world. My fervent prayer is, that it may please God to augment those efforts a hundred fold. Nor do I wish to overlook or undervalue the influence of individuals, and of some Societies, whose benevolence has been directed to various parts of the Continent. But what

enlightened Christian can hear of the desolations of most of the Reformed churches, without deep emotion—without cherishing the desire of becoming instrumental in their spiritual resuscitation?—that, in place of appearing in small and feeble groups, scarcely preserving the existence of religion in their little communities, they may be inspired with new life, may lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of their tabernacles, and soon be enabled to proportion their efforts for the evangelization of their respective localities, in some due measure, to the necessities demanding them. And who can estimate the amount of accession which christian effort for the approaching extension of the kingdom of Christ over the world would receive, were these foreign churches awakened to new zeal, augmented by many converts, and enlisted with cordial energy in the service of the Gospel?

Would any concentration of British influence be too great for the realization, under the blessing of God, of such objects? If we are inert, Rome is not; and if she advance with as gigantic strides for a few years longer, as she has done for the few years past, the ground may soon be too exclusively occupied, and too securely guarded, for us to attempt it. Would that the zeal of Rome might provoke Britain to jealousy!

If any thing in the following pages shall contribute, in any degree, to excite or increase British interest in the spiritual welfare of our continental brethren, my chief object in preparing them will be accomplished.

GLASGOW, *March* 13, 1844.

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NOTICES

OF THE STATE OF RELIGION, &c.

CHAPTER I.

LOCALITY AND INSTITUTIONS OF GENEVA.

IN commencing these addresses, I may be allowed to mention my original design in their preparation. I thought it natural that the affectionate flock with whom I have had the happiness to be long connected, and who so cheerfully consented to resign for a season their claim on my pastoral labours, should wish to know somewhat of the condition,—the spiritual condition particularly—of the country in which, during my absence from them, I intended chiefly to sojourn; and it was not less natural that I should desire to gratify, as far as my opportunities of inquiry and observation might enable me, that laudable wish. Having considerable leisure during my residence in Geneva, and possessing opportunities which might never afterwards be within my reach, of making myself somewhat acquainted with the state of things in a country with

which so many interesting associations have been connected for centuries, I gladly availed myself of these, with the view of communicating their results, in some week-evening addresses, to such of the people of my charge as could conveniently assemble to hear them; but I had no intention, in the first instance at least, of giving them any additional publicity. Christian friends around, however, hearing of my purpose, kindly expressed a desire that their delivery should be more public; and, although quite aware that the addresses had but slender claims to general notice, I felt that it would be uncourteous to decline compliance with the request presented to me. I shall be quite satisfied if, through the blessing of God, any instruction, any gratification, any advantage, of whatever amount, shall be imparted to those who may choose to attend; and it will afford me great additional pleasure, if, through the considerate liberality of my hearers, a small and seasonable supply shall be afforded to the temporal wants of some of that destitute class of our brethren and fellow-citizens, at all times unhappily very numerous in this city, and at the present time in circumstances of great and urgent necessity. It is pleasant to associate beneficence to others with enjoyment to ourselves; and, in the spirit of him who went about doing good, to render our undertakings subservient to the sacred objects of Christian compassion.

The addresses will be occupied with the following topics. In the first, I shall give some account of the appearance of Geneva and its vicinity, with notices of its present condition, political, religious, and educa-

tional. I shall then relate the progressive decline of religion in Geneva, its causes, manifestations, and degree; a subject which, from its melancholy importance, but instructive lessons, will necessarily include considerable details. The fourth will be occupied with the more cheering subject of the begun, and, I hope, progressive revival of religion in those parts. A fifth will be devoted to the state of the question of the separation of the church from the state in that influential republic and its vicinity, in which I shall have occasion to bring before you the position and sentiments of some eminently influential servants of Christ, particularly Bournier, Vinet, and especially Gaussen, Malan, and perhaps, above all, the justly celebrated Merle D'Aubigné. The sixth and last will be occupied with the condition and urgent claims of the friends of religion in the new kingdom of Belgium.

The observations on the subjects I have thus indicated are sufficiently unambitious in their object. They do not aspire to be a history, to present even a historical outline of the political or religious vicissitudes of Geneva. They leave entirely the inviting fields of the literary or scientific tourist, researches in this department, varying in their degrees of merit, already existing in abundance. They claim only to be what I have designated them, *Notices* of the condition of Geneva, chiefly in regard to religion; and to education, and civil and ecclesiastical polity, as connected with religion. I shall include a few shorter allusions to the religious condition of other countries with which Geneva is more or less connected. And, I may add,

these observations have been prepared in compliance with the wishes of some friends of religion, who, alive to its interests at home, cannot be indifferent to its decline or revival in other lands. For persons of this class these pages are intended, accompanied, I trust, with prayers to God, that it may please him to render them useful in some degree, for promoting in the breasts of his own children in Britain a livelier interest in the spiritual welfare of their continental brethren.

No one who has either visited Geneva, or who is at all acquainted with its history, can wonder at the interest which it excites. The town itself is striking in its appearance ; its environs are beautiful and magnificent.* It is situated at the western extremity of

* " Many circumstances contribute to render Geneva, small as its territory is, a very delightful place. The air of tranquillity, freedom, and politeness, visible among the better sort of the inhabitants, is very inviting to strangers, especially those of a studious or contemplative cast, to reside among them. Its neighbourhood, both by art and nature, is enchantingly pleasant ; its air wholesome ; and its inhabitants, mechanics especially, are industrious and ingenious. The city and small territory about it is served with excellent provisions, and at a cheap rate ; and it is a general thoroughfare for traders and travellers to and from France, Germany, and Italy. These and many other advantages, joined to the modesty and regularity of the magistrates and literati, have brought a great resort of young foreigners of the highest distinction, to study under their professors, and to complete themselves in the French language."—*Universal History*, vol. xxxii. pp. 147, 148. A succinct history of the Genevan Republic follows, in which its amazing struggles for liberty, and the circumstances which divine providence employed to protect this interesting people, from domestic and foreign enemies, are very lucidly detailed.

the spacious lake which bears its name, and occupies partly a flat immediately contiguous to the lake, partly sloping banks which rise to a higher level. Modern buildings, handsome, if not elegant, skirt the lake; while the old town is a congeries of irregular, crooked, narrow, but remarkably clean streets, the houses very lofty, showing both in their structure and condition plentiful tokens of the olden time. In the higher parts of the town, massive edifices, with large gateways, and square courts, bespeak the residence of wealth and station; while the city in general affords every indication of widely diffused intelligence, industry, and comfort. The town is fortified with pretty rather than formidable ramparts, designed, one would suppose, rather as healthful promenades for the citizens, or as a neat model of fortification, than as any effectual protection against the assaults of modern warfare. As you walk along the streets of the city, you are met with monuments of the great Reformation. Inscribed above its gates you read the motto, "*Post tenebras lux*," (*after darkness, light*)—a motto very appropriately adopted by the Genevan Reformers. In passing one of its narrowest, but most antique streets, you are pointed to the house in which John Calvin lived and died. Its gothic cathedral, 800 years old, is the church which the Reformer purged from superstition; and as you enter, you are thrilled, as if his pale face yet looked from that pulpit, as if these arches still echoed with his solemn voice. On one side you find the college which was instituted, and the library which was formed; in another, the hospital which was erected, in this golden

age of Geneva. Behind and above the town you tread a spacious common, a grass plot of table land, fragrant with the thyme and other wild flowers of this region; and here the fascinating environs of Geneva are all around you. You can trace the zig-zag of its ramparts—you see the antique roofs of its buildings, and the modest turrets of its cathedral—the rural residences of its wealthier citizens are thick spread amidst gardens and groves—before you is its placid lake, stretching, like an inland sea, to the far distant mountains; its elevated banks are thickly planted with villas, hamlets, and small towns, with vineyards and corn-fields—you hear the rushing of the blue impetuous Rhone, which hurries in a broad and deep flood from the lake, as if it would speedily drain it—while your horizon is bounded in every direction by those vast mountain ridges which form the chief physical attraction of Switzerland. At your back is the Saleve range, rising precipitously within two miles of you, to the height of 4000 feet above the sea level. On the left is the Jura, a long mountain track, presenting its dark sides and rocky summits, and exceeding 6000 feet in height. More in front, and beyond the lake, are other mountains, most of them still loftier. While, at the distant extremity of a vast recess toward the right hand, are the snowy sides and summits of the great Alps, Mont Blanc towering above all, and shooting up, like massive silver, above the clouds. Who can survey this glorious panorama without deep emotion? What an array of the monuments of the power and beneficence of Jehovah!

If your mind glances at the history of these regions, your excitement rises. These are the mountains which Hannibal and his hosts, which Cæsar and his legions traversed. In those vallies and fastnesses, those hardy tribes dwelt, with whom the Roman conqueror found it so hard to contend. There Tell awakened slumbering liberty. There also Zuingli, and Farel, and Oecolampadius, and Calvin, and kindred spirits, waged a noble warfare, and gained triumphs more pure and sublime. No wonder that this Geneva excites an interest so extensive and profound. No wonder that 30,000 strangers are said to be drawn to it every year. It is probable that no state, so small, ever filled such a space in the history of the world, or exercised an influence so great over other nations, since the age of the Grecian Republics. In the more important views in which human interests are to be regarded, even these States cannot be pronounced exceptions. Let us take a closer view of Geneva.

The Canton of Geneva, one of the twenty-two of which the Helvetic Confederation is now composed, is small, both in its extent and population. Its extreme length does not exceed 18 English miles, and its breadth is about half as much. The whole population in 1837, was 58,666, and is understood now to approach 60,000. This population is distributed in nearly equal parts betwixt Geneva itself, and the rest of the canton.

The government, as nearly as well can be, is a pure democracy. A revolution, not unaccompanied with

tumult, and a little blood, occurred in 1841, into the particulars of which it is foreign to my purpose to enter; but the results, slightly modifying the preceding state of things in the government of the canton, may be shortly given.

As the foundation of their institutions, "the people of Geneva decree," * that "the sovereignty resides in the people," that "the form of government is a representative democracy," that "all Genevese are equal in the eye of the law," that "individual liberty is guaranteed," that "home is inviolable," that "property is inviolable," that "the liberty of the press is sacred," while "the law represses the abuse of this liberty," that "liberty of industry—of instruction—of petition," are all secured, subject to certain specified arrangements.

The legislative body is the "Great Council," chosen by the male population, who have reached twenty-one years. They are elected for four years, one half being chosen every two years, but being immediately re-eligible. Any citizen is eligible, who has completed his twenty-fifth year. This body amounts to 274.

The executive power is vested in "the Council of State," a board of thirteen persons, chosen by the "Great Council," from their own body. The members of the Council of State retain their places and privileges in the Great Council. Two office-bearers called *Syndics*, a well-known name in Genevese history, are

* I quote from an official document in the French language, published immediately after the revolution.

chosen from the Council of State by the Great Council, to hold office for one year; the one as President of the Council of State, the other as vice-President. These officers are not re-eligible till at least one year has expired after their year of service; but during that first year after they retire, they have the name of "*the elder Syndics*; (*anciens Syndics*), and as such, form, with the two in office, "*the College of Syndics*," who are the acting committee of the Council of State. The members of the representative body receive no pay, but the Syndics have a salary of 3000 francs (£120.) and the other Councillors of State 2,500 francs each.

A judicial body (*L' Ordre Judiciaire*), is also constituted for civil and criminal administration. And there is no want of attention to military and police departments.

Very distinct and minute provisions are made for the departments of religious worship, and public instruction. It accords with the design of these remarks to bring the arrangements of Geneva in these important matters more fully before my readers; nor could I have done so very intelligibly, without having first made the statements which have been just given.

The ecclesiastical establishment has long been, and is still, a species of Presbyterianism. The government of the church is vested by the constitution in two bodies—the *Venerable Company of Pastors*, and the *Consistory* (*Consistoire*).

The Venerable Company includes, first, all pastors

in town and country, who hold a charge, and are engaged in official service; next, the professors of theology; thirdly, those denominated *senior pastors*, (*pasteurs anciens*) that is, such as from age or infirmity have withdrawn from active service, provided they are approved as members of the Company by a special decision of the Consistory; and lastly, such other "Genevese ecclesiastics" as are invited by the Company, and approved by the Consistory. These last refer to such as, for distinction's sake, are denominated *ministers*, that is, those who have finished their literary and theological studies, and have been *ordained* to the ministerial office, although they have never held a charge; for, according to the forms of the Genevese church, all who preach are previously ordained to office, and are invested at once with the full powers of ministers of the gospel. The number of the Company is at present fifty-one, of which number twenty-four belong to the city, and twenty-seven to the country. Of the twenty-four in the city, six have become senior; of the twenty-seven in the country, nine have passed into this order, leaving forty-two for active service in the whole canton. Of the class of *ministers*, none seem at present to have a place among the Company. The ordinary meetings of the Company are weekly, being held on the morning of every Friday, at ten; and these meetings are presided over by one of their number as *moderator*, or by another, who is denominated *vice-president*. These meetings, I believe, are invariably private.

The Consistory is a body composed partly of clergy-

men, partly of laymen. Of the former, there are fifteen from the Venerable Company, and named by that body; while of the latter, there are twenty-four, of whom fifteen are named by a college (elective body) composed of Protestant citizens, making part of the municipal council of Geneva, and nine others by a college composed of Protestant citizens, making part of the municipal councils in the other districts of the canton. These are elected for six years, and are renewed in third parts every two years, those going out being immediately re-eligible. The ordinary meetings of the Consistory are also weekly, being held on the morning of every Thursday, at eleven.

The powers of the Company, as fixed by the Constitution, are to direct religious instruction and theological teaching—to decide on the admission and consecration of candidates for the holy ministry—to name the professors of theology—to exercise a superintendence over its own body (*police de son corps*)—to address counsels to pastors and ministers—and to propose to the Consistory, either of its own accord, or at the suggestion of that body, such measures and regulations as it judges advisable for the interests of the Protestant church in the canton.

The Consistory is authorized to exercise a general superintendence (*surveillance*) over the interests of the church—after having asked the advice of the Company, it makes and executes regulations on whatever regards the administration of the church and of worship—with the advice of the Company it fixes the number and boundaries of the parishes—it decides in

all cases of discipline, and can censure, suspend, or replace the pastors.

But it is expressly reserved, that the decisions of both these ecclesiastical bodies, particularly respecting the appointment, the suspension, or the replacing of pastors or professors of theology, and respecting the number and limits of the parishes, shall be subject to the approbation of the Council of State.

The word *parish* (*paroisse*) has not the same meaning in the ecclesiastical language of Geneva as in this country. It is not a legally defined locality, having a parish church, one or more parochial ministers, and a distinct ecclesiastical organization. It simply denotes a district, there being in Geneva twenty-four such districts, one or more being placed under the superintendence of a pastor, for such special religious services as he chooses to render to the inhabitants by week-day attentions. Whether the rural districts are arranged in the same way, I do not certainly know, but I think they are.

In the city there are five places of worship in connection with the Establishment, one of these, the cathedral, or the church of St. Pierre, being shut in winter, on account, I believe, of its spacious dimensions, which, although they please the eye, render the structure insufferably cold in the winter season. These churches are not specially allocated to particular pastors, but are supplied by the pastors in rotation; an arrangement, one would suppose, not very conducive either to regularity of attendance, or to the important object of continuous and effective instruction.

The order and the times of service are fixed by authority. The Genevan church has always had its liturgy, which, although much less minute and cumbersome than the English liturgy, is abundantly specific. It provides that there shall be morning and afternoon services in all the churches every Lord's day—that in two churches there shall be sermon at both meetings; and in other two, a sermon in the morning, and the exposition of the catechism, in place of a sermon, in the afternoon—and that the following shall be the order of service:—In the service in which there is a sermon, worship begins by singing a portion of a psalm, then a student of divinity reads a part of the scriptures and the decalogue; afterwards the minister reads the prayer, which is a confession of sin—reads the psalm to be sung, and after praise, again prays and preaches. The service is then concluded with another prayer, which is read, with praise, and with the benediction, which is also read. In the afternoon, when there is a sermon, the services are similar; when the catechism takes the place of a sermon, a portion of it is explained, and the scholars in the first four classes of the college are examined. Devotional services, with similar formality, are observed at these times.

Nor is public worship limited to the Lord's day. On every Thursday morning there is an expository discourse in one of the churches, in which the historical books of the Old and New Testament are explained in order; and it is provided that the discourse on each Thursday shall be the subject of remark and conver-

sation at the meeting of the Venerable Company on each Friday morning—a provision unquestionably intended for the protection of doctrinal purity, and for common improvement, although I am unable to say either how far it is understood to have ever accomplished its object, or even whether the form of the provision continues to be regularly observed. The Venerable Company, as I have just said, meets in private.

In addition to this weekly sermon, two churches are opened on the other week days; and the exercises consist of prayer, praise, and the reading of portions of the scriptures, with a few reflections.

The Lord's Supper is dispensed four times a year, namely, on the Sabbaths after Christmas, the Passover, the Ascension, and on a Sabbath about the beginning of September. The holidays referred to are appointed to be kept, and special services are enjoined, corresponding with the events which they commemorate. There is a preparatory service, including a sermon, on the Saturday before each communion. The elements are given to the communicants standing—the men first, and then the females, coming up to the officiating minister, receiving them from their hands, and immediately retiring—a mode of celebrating the sacred Supper, in my view, any thing but reverent in external appearance, very little suited to promote composure of spirit in the ambulating company of communicants, and ill-fitted to represent and to realise that union and fellowship of believers in Christ, which this holy ordin-

ance is intended to set forth. During prayer the congregation stand, and sit during praise. In the latter service the organ is used.

To show with what formality the various services are fixed, I may give the following list, even at the hazard of being too minute, which is prefixed to the Genevese Liturgy :—The confession of sins—the Lord's prayer—the Apostles' creed—the form of benediction—prayer after the morning service of Sabbath—prayer for Monday, for Tuesday, for Wednesday, for Thursday, after sermon, for Friday, for Saturday—additions to the prayers in the time of the solemnities—prayer for the second office after the first day of the year—prayer for the Wednesday before the fast—prayer after the sermon on the day of the fast—great prayer of the fast—prayer for the second office of Christmas—liturgy of baptism (in which godfathers are joined with parents)—form of receiving catechumens to the Lord's Supper—prayer for the Friday before the day of the passover (the crucifixion)—prayer for Thursday and Saturday before the communion—great prayer of Saturday before the communion—the liturgy of the holy Supper—prayer of thanksgiving on the evening of the days of the communion, when there is no sermon—liturgy of marriage—the decalogue. The book is concluded with a table of the chapters of the Bible which are appointed to be read in the churches, and of the psalms to be sung. The latter are from the Psalms of David only, with the exception of the song of Simeon, appointed to be sung after the communion.

Such is a short view of the constitution and administration of the church of Geneva. Without anticipating reflections which must be made afterwards, I suggest the following here.

By the theory of the constitution of this church, a very large provision is made for christian instruction and worship, for ministerial superintendence of all classes, and very particularly, for the religious instruction of the youth. These assuredly are high objects; and, provided the religious instruction imparted be wholesome, that which, by declaring the truth respecting the gospel of our salvation, is God's great instrument for saving and sanctifying the souls of men; and provided the worship rendered be inspired by this truth, the church of Geneva, though with a constitution far from faultless, would practically answer some of the highest purposes for which the christian church has been instituted.

There is a very strong infusion of secular influence thrown into the constitution and administration of this church. The Consistory is, to a great extent, a secular body. There is no provision that its lay members shall be religious men; and the electors of those persons require to have no other qualification than that of being members of the municipal councils, and accompanied with the vague profession that they are not Roman Catholics, but Protestants. The Council of State, without whose sanction neither Company nor Consistory can accomplish any thing, is entirely a political body, the members of which are not necessarily Protestant even by profession. The church of

Geneva is thus entirely at the mercy of the State of Geneva; and if there is any thing to be apprehended from the absolute subjection of the church to the world, the church of Geneva occupies a most unenviable position. There are cases, however, in which little practical distinction exists betwixt the two, in which the church and the world are almost identical.

In the estimation of the great body of British and American Christians, there is too great a prevalence of form in the Genevese administration. The same prayers repeated every Lord's day—read, as well as repeated—the creed and the commandments recurring perpetually—the very words of devotion the same from the beginning of the year to the end thereof, or rather, from the commencement to the close of life; surely, unless there be some strong counteracting power, some unusual vital energy in the ministers and in the worshippers, there is a hazard that a decent but dead formalism shall take the place of a worship in spirit and in truth. I speak of means only; for I am well aware that formalism may prevail where such formality is unknown, and that the Spirit of God can impart living fervour, where his own truth guides the worship, and whether fixed forms exist or are wanting.

Where are the people amidst these ecclesiastical and civil arrangements on their behalf? When do they assemble to ask in prayer a minister from the Lord, to consult together respecting some pastor according to God's own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding, or to invite such an one, when they have found him, to break among them the bread

of life? These "rights and privileges of the christian people," this healthful exercise of the judgment, piety, and affection of Christians, have no place here. Alike unthought of by rulers and ruled, the former do not give what the latter do not ask; and when death has removed one pastor, the people are as passive in regard to his successor, as the Italians for the next pope, or the Austrians for the next emperor. How bad usages, fixed and perpetuated by law, often spread death over whole communities!

But the Protestant is not the only form of worship established and supported by the laws of Geneva.

They have a *Roman Catholic Establishment* also, sanctioned and supported by the State. On this painful view of the Genevese institutions the law speaks with sufficient precision and authority. Its words are—"The constitution guarantees the support, the free exercise, and the maintenance of the Catholic worship, (*le maintien, le libre exercice, et l'entretien*) to the citizens of the territories united to the canton of Geneva, by the treaty of Paris, of 20th November, 1815, and by the treaty of Turin, 16th March, 1816. The nomination of the *curés* (officiating priests) is submitted to the approbation of the Council of State. Although the Protestant religion is dominant in the territory of the ancient republic of Geneva, there shall be in the city of Geneva a church destined for Catholic worship, where it shall be celebrated as formerly. This church shall be placed under the authority of the Council of State, to whose approbation the nomination of its *Curé* shall be submitted. The support of the

Catholic worship is at the charge of the State." This Catholic establishment, as might be expected, is well provided with zealous and indefatigable functionaries. It is presided over by "His Highness (*Sa Grandeur*) Pierre Toby Zenny, bishop of Lausanne and Geneva," whose residence is in Fribourg, the capital of the adjoining canton of that name. One curé, and three vicars, have the charge of their *parish of Geneva*; and no fewer than twenty-one curés have charges in the rural districts, where the Catholics of the canton chiefly reside.

This most infelicitous arrangement is fitted, if any thing can be, to awaken the Protestants of Geneva to the perils and the duties of their position. Of the magnitude and urgency of the danger, I shall speak afterwards. It is enough to remark here, that "the enemy has come in," or rather, has been brought in, "like a flood;" let us hope that "the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."

Let us next advert to the state of education in this city and canton. Secular education is here disjoined from religious, an arrangement which the double religious establishment seems to render necessary; and although the citizens are not obliged by law to educate their children, secular instruction has become such a usage, is so much valued by the people, and is so amply provided for by the civil institutions, that it may be said to be universal. The following are the provisions of the constitution for "public instruction." "The law regulates the organization of those establishments for public instruction, which are in whole

or in part at the charge of the state. Every *commune* (district) shall be provided with establishments for primary instruction, and shall provide concurrently with the state the expenses of their erection and support, in the proportion which shall be fixed by the law. The Genevese, whatever be their worship, have an equal right to be admitted to all the establishments of public instruction in the canton. For this purpose, religious instruction is distinct from the other parts of instruction."

The department of secular instruction is placed under the direction of a "council," appointed, I believe, by the Council of State, and consists of five members. The establishments over which it presides are distinguished into General, Auxiliary, and Special. The General establishments are the Academy, the Colleges of Geneva and Cavouge, (the latter being a considerable town about a mile from Geneva,) and the Primary schools.

The *Academy*, which corresponds in rank with our universities, is divided into the four faculties of theology, law, science, and literature. The first has five professors, one on the exegesis of the New Testament, criticism, and sacred antiquities: a second on dogmatic theology, and christian morality: a third on Hebrew, Chaldee, and the exegesis of the Old Testament: a fourth on historical theology: and a fifth on theology, apologetical, and homiletical. The course of study occupies four years, the time of attendance each year being nine months. The students of theology must have previously finished

their philosophical and literary studies, which also occupy four years. The number of students at present attending these classes amounts to sixteen or eighteen.

In the faculty of law, there are also five professors, and as many classes.

In the faculty of sciences, there are no fewer than twelve professors, having each a separate department, namely, Elementary Mathematics—Natural Philosophy, general and experimental—Philosophy, and the history of Philosophy—Botany—Zoology—Astronomy—the theory and application of Mechanics—Superior Mathematics—Experimental Chemistry—Mineralogy—Zoology, and Physical Geography.

The faculty of literature has ten professors, having as many separate branches. History—Rhetoric, and general Belles Lettres—Latin Literature and Antiquities—the history and criticism of Greek and Latin Literature—Modern Literature—Greek Literature and Antiquities—Classical Literature—Archæology—history of Statistics—Arabic. Altogether, the attendance on the various institutions of the academy, is somewhat under two hundred students.

The second class of general establishments, are the *Colleges*, nearly corresponding with the high schools in the great towns of Scotland. The College of Geneva is presided over by a principal, has sixteen teachers, and two chaplains, the one a Protestant, the other a Roman Catholic. This College is attended by betwixt three hundred and four hundred pupils.

The College of Carouge has three teachers, and is also provided with a chaplain from each of the two

established communions. The academy has no separate structure for the accommodation of the classes, the meetings of which are held in various parts of the town. The College is a separate building, plain, but commodious.

The primary schools are very numerous, and are placed under a commission of eight persons, with two inspectors.

The salaries of the professors and teachers are small; and the payments of the pupils are so inconsiderable, as that education may be almost said to be gratuitous.

In a system so extensive, and in which so many are employed, there must, of course, be great diversity in the qualifications and consequent success of the teachers; but I have been assured by very competent testimony, that, upon the whole, the system is very efficient, that it is so in the College in a very high degree, in which, in addition to the talents and assiduity of the teachers, the stimulant of emulation is said to exist in at least as high a measure as it is safe to employ it. The annual meeting of the pupils for the distribution of prizes, is a very stirring scene, and cannot fail to excite the buoyant hearts of the youth. The classes march, with the teachers, in full uniform, heading them, from the College to the Cathedral: the procession is accompanied by the municipal council, the highest authorities in Geneva, and the members of the Venerable Company; military parade adds importance to the spectacle; the streets along which the procession passes are lined with the

citizens; the church is thronged with spectators; a large gallery is appropriated to strangers, by whom it is generally filled to excess; and, amidst a stream of martial music, the Genevese youth enter, not a little conscious of the place they fill in the proceedings of the day, and the interest they are commanding. After prayer, addresses are delivered, which may, at least, tend to subordinate the excitement to good purposes.

Although all the seminaries are accessible to Catholics and Protestants equally, I believe few, if any, children of Catholics attend the primary schools; and to supply instruction in this department, in a manner coincident with their creed, the Catholic curés have schools of their own. Some of the youth of this class, however, are found in the College.

There are many other educational institutions in Geneva, which it would be tedious to describe, but which cannot fail to have a powerful influence in moulding the young mind, and in improving the habits and tastes of the people. There is the "Industrial School," in which practical instruction is imparted in arithmetic, in geometry, in the elements of physics and chemistry, and in descriptive design of machines. There is "The School of the Fine Arts," in three departments—ornament, model, and figure. There is also a school for gymnastics.

The public have free access to a very considerable museum, founded by a General Garth, in which there is a valuable collection of works of art, and of natural curiosities—a favourite resort of all classes of the

citizens. One of the most tasteful and elegant buildings in Geneva has been erected for the accommodation of this museum.

A botanical garden has recently been formed, which is annually improving. It is beautifully situated, and much frequented.

I cannot omit to mention two other institutions ;— the one the Public Library, instituted by Calvin, and now containing about 50,000 volumes, in all departments of literature, to which, at certain hours on five days a-week, the public have access, where any book you wish to consult is brought to you, and where you may read in tranquillity, and extract at pleasure : the other is the “*Société de Lecture*,” in which all the leading continental newspapers are furnished, and the chief larger periodicals, both continental and English. Attached to this latter institution, there are a considerable library, and a rapidly increasing museum. I often spent an hour in this place, and could not but be struck with the indications of thought and intelligence which the silent readers (for not a word is allowed above a whisper) presented. Adepts in phrenology and physiognomy might find quite a harvest in the manifestations afforded by the heads of these eager Genevese readers.

The constitution fixes the means by which these establishments, ecclesiastical and educational, are supported. A board of fifteen is appointed, which is denominated “*The Economical Society*,” (*Société Economique*,) of which three members are appointed by the Council of State, and six by each of the two elec-

toral bodies, by whom the lay members of the Consistory are chosen. To this board "the property of the different foundations created or recognised by anterior constitutions and laws, is committed," with the provision that this property shall be kept separate from the funds of the State, and shall not be diverted from its proper destination, unless with the consent of the Consistory, and the municipal councils. The funds existing suffice, or are made to suffice, for their respective objects; for the salaries of teachers and pastors are very small. With that jealous attention to official responsibility which marks the code of Geneva, the members of this board are elected for the same space, and removed in the same way, as the lay members of the Consistory. They are also required to submit their accounts annually to the Council of State, and afterwards to publish them.

The effect of such institutions is to keep in a state of much activity the minds of the Genevese. To all that regards their civil and political condition, and the secular affairs of their country, the popular mind is sufficiently sensitive. Dull monotony forms no part of their character. Like the surface of their lake, it is little at rest, and easily acted upon; and gusts from any quarter soon throw it into unpleasant agitation. Happily, the disturbance in both cases generally soon subsides.

The fine climate, and attractive scenery of Geneva, naturally induce the inhabitants to spend much of their summer evenings in the open air; and they have many

artificial inducements. Their green ramparts, their magnificent common, their long shaded walks, the banks of their classic river, and their lovely lake, an isle, like a gem, in that lake, to which, though small, they resort in crowds, and from which the summits of Mont Blanc, and other Alpine heights, reflect in many hues the last rays of the setting sun, and the abundant supply of benches which the considerate bounty of the little republic supplies in all these places, render their evenings attractive in the extreme. One need not wonder if grosser tastes are supplanted, in a great measure, by the gentler and happier habits which such circumstances tend to form. Indeed, I could not but often contrast, unfavourably for ourselves, the population of Geneva generally, with too large a proportion of that of our own country. During the whole time of my residence there, I never saw one case of drunkenness, never one of overt indecency. Such vices exist, but they do not meet the eye, and I do not believe they are very extensive in their range.

I shall only add, in this preliminary sketch, that the physical condition of the people seems highly favourable. Infectious diseases are little known; employment is abundant; the rate of wages is good; and provision is made in a public hospital, maintained since the period of the Reformation, for those in indigence and disease. I never saw a person in the Genevese territory apparently in the condition of a beggar; and although there is begging in abundance in Switzerland, whether from necessity or greed, I

never was applied to for charity in this canton, but in two cases, in each of which it seemed to me that the applicant, like myself, was an alien.

Although it does not belong to my plan to attempt any sketch of the religious and educational institutions of the other Swiss cantons, I may state generally, that in those that are Protestant, they considerably resemble those of Geneva. Of the twenty-two cantons, eight are Protestant; nine are Roman Catholic; while in the remaining ones, both creeds are legally acknowledged. The Protestant population greatly exceeds the Catholic, amounting to about two-thirds of the 2,012,500, the present population of Switzerland.

Of the state of the Catholic cantons I made few local inquiries, nor did these lead to any important or very satisfactory results. In the Protestant cantons, the ecclesiastical institutions vary somewhat from those of Geneva; but their administration, in regard to times and mode of service, to a great degree coincides with them. Education seems universal in the whole Protestant cantons. This noble fruit of the Reformation, Protestant Switzerland continues to yield in abundance. The inquiries of Lord Brougham respecting the state of education in Europe in 1828, brought him to the conclusion, that the canton Vaud, of which Lausanne is the capital, and containing a population of nearly 200,000, was one of the most universally educated districts in Europe. One-seventh of the population was in the various seminaries; while in London there is not much more than one-sixteenth.

Since Lord Brougham's inquiries were instituted, education has lost nothing of its vigour in that beautiful portion of Switzerland. Indeed, the law renders the education of their children imperative on the parents and guardians of youth, although, I believe, it is rarely necessary for legal compulsion to be interposed ; so that, probably, an uneducated youth is not to be found in the canton. In looking from the heights of Lausanne over that blooming region, what a cheering reflection, that an untaught being, beyond the age of infancy, does not tread its soil.

In Basle, where I had some opportunity of making local inquiries, the educational machine seems complete and active ; and the progressive steps, from the primary school to the higher departments, seem very judiciously arranged. I was informed by Professor Hoffmann of the Basle Institution, that he believed education was universal in the city and canton. Nor is the education merely secular. As in Geneva, the public worship of the Sabbath begins at nine in the morning ; and at eleven the youth are assembled for religious instruction in the churches. I attended one of those juvenile meetings, at which I estimated the number present as not less than from 400 to 500 ; and I have seldom witnessed a more refreshing spectacle. The pupils were of both sexes, and apparently from the various orders of society, as in the ordinary services of the church ; and their decorous behaviour, their intelligent and eager looks, the manner of the minister, in which condescension, affection, and authority seemed admirably blended, were in the highest degree impressive. I could not

but sigh for the condition of our own empire, compared with the youth of Protestant Switzerland. What a proportion of the rising race in that England, which aspires to be the instructress of the world, is left in a condition of gross and almost brutal barbarism!

The following remarks, written in 1830, on the "Education of Switzerland," is, I think, with one remarkable exception, substantially correct, at least as it regards the Protestant cantons. "Switzerland is remarkable for nothing more than for the means of education it possesses, and the consequent intelligence of its inhabitants. In this respect, it is not inferior to the best educated countries in Europe. When the means of education are sufficiently ample in a country, from one ninth to one tenth of the population are attending school." (One seventh would be nearer the truth.)* "In Scotland, where our parochial schools afford us such facilities, the proportion undergoing education is below that average. In England, the deficiency is still more apparent. In France, not more than the twenty-eighth part of the people are enjoying the blessings of education; while in the Pays de Vaud, the proportion is one eighth, being more than the average;" (about the average,) "so that the inhabitants of this district have been pronounced the best educated in Europe. The state of schools, however, is different in the different cantons. In none of them, however, is this important subject neglected; but edu-

* The proportion in the Prussian States is about one-seventh. In the States of New England, and in New York, the proportion is still greater.

cation is more generally diffused among the Catholic than the Protestant States." (This is certainly a slip; the opposite must be, or should be, intended.) "The most improved plans of instruction, such as that of Bell and Lancaster, have been introduced; and every means have been used to promote the great object in view,—the education of the people. Nor has Switzerland merely introduced the plans of others, she has, with great success, tried methods of her own, and has thus lent her aid to the great cause of education. The celebrated school of Pestalozzi, at Yverdun, in the Pays de Vaud, has been visited and celebrated by every traveller. This was the first seminary in which the intellectual system, as it has not inaptly been called, or that system which consists, not in mechanical routine, but in illustrating the *rationale* of every subject taught, and of cultivating the mental faculties, had its origin, and was brought to great perfection. It embraces also the plan of mutual instruction, on the part of the pupils, and recommended by Bell and Lancaster." *

Having presented this general and introductory information, I shall next attempt to supply some facts as to the religious condition of Geneva.

* Edinburgh Encyclopædia.—Article, "Switzerland."

CHAPTER II.

THE DECLINE OF RELIGION IN GENEVA.

It has often been remarked, that periods of great and sudden change in the condition of nations have ever been signalized by the appearance of extraordinary and eminent individuals. To the influence of such men, revolutions must, in some cases, be mainly ascribed, and they are thus, in so far, the causes of the events with which their names have been associated ; but the events also have acted upon the men, and have tended to form and elicit the characters by which they have afterwards been known. The influence of the agents and of the events has thus been reciprocal, the agents producing the events, the events moulding the agents. Such periods of great public trial and conflict, amidst which good influences have been abundant, have contributed to bring out the noblest manifestations of character of which the human soul is susceptible. The various elements of mind have been thrown into the crucible, and while much that is

worthless has been detached from them, they have entered into new and more profitable combinations, and have come forth in finer and brighter forms, than before they were cast into it. These facts, which the great revolution of the 16th century so abundantly developed, were nowhere more striking and plentiful than in Geneva.

Indeed, one of the highest services which some ecclesiastical historian is yet destined to render to the Church of Christ, one of the noblest efforts which sacred genius can aspire after in this department of truth, is to furnish a bold and faithful portraiture of men and events in the Genevan Church, during the first century, from the commencement of the Reformation. The amazing struggles which this small State made for securing her freedom and independence—the circumstances which, under the guidance of Providence, led to their success—the arrival, in the midst of the Genevese, during these conflicts, and even by occasion of them, of a nobler liberty than they themselves were in quest of—the combination of the highest qualities and acquirements by which the leaders of the Genevan Reformation were distinguished, vast talents, which reached, in some cases, maturity even in youth, learning unsurpassed even in that age of learning, above all, their moral qualities, their faith, their devotion, their patience, their heroic fortitude, their humility and self-denial, which mark them out as rare instruments, at distant intervals, prepared by God, for accomplishing his gracious purposes on behalf of the world and of the Church—these assuredly fur-

nish the finest materials for the highest department of historical writing.

Farel, Viret, and Calvin are the labourers to whom I chiefly refer. Their characters are inscribed on their works; but the following short sketch from their friend and fellow-labourer, Beza, is striking:—"It was beautiful to observe the union and yet diversity of these three great men, in the service of their common Master. Farel excelled in boldness and grandeur of mind. The thunders of his preaching could hardly be heard without trembling, or his ardent prayers without the soul being lifted to heaven. Viret, on the other hand, was distinguished by a sweet persuasive eloquence, which made his hearers hang upon his lips, almost whether they would or not. While Calvin filled the mind with nearly as many sentiments as he uttered words. Hence it often appeared to me that the union of the three would have formed a perfect preacher."

Among the three, Calvin was unquestionably the chief. At the age of twenty-six, he was distinguished among the reformed; at that early age, his greatest work, in a brief and imperfect form, indeed, was produced, of the preface to which, addressed to the king of France, it has been said, "that had his own sins, and the sins of his people permitted a prince of Francis's excellent judgment to read it, it could hardly have failed to inflict a severe wound on the church of Rome." The following account is given of his almost super-human labours. "In every fortnight he preached one entire week," (once a-day probably,)

“thrice in every week he delivered divinity lectures; on the Thursdays he presided in the Consistory; and on the Fridays in what was called the Congregation, a meeting for the collation and exposition of the scriptures. Frequently he was called to assist the Council with his advice, which his skill in the science of law, combined with his general wisdom and talent, made him very competent to do. His correspondence also was very extensive, the fame of his learning and piety causing him to be consulted from all quarters; and he himself complains of the continual interruptions, which, as might naturally have been expected, he encountered from the visits of strangers, and from other avocations. Yet his copious commentaries on the Scriptures and other writings, chiefly in a polished Latin style,” (amounting to nine volumes in folio,) “are known to be very elaborate and accurate. Such were the performances of a man whose constitution was delicate, his health bad,” and who died in his fifty-fifth year.

I cannot refrain from inserting here the following tribute to the character of this great man, from the pen of a learned foreign historian, whose sentiments on many subjects differed widely from those of the Genevan reformer; and also the encomium of the acute translator, whose opinions were yet more distant from those of Calvin. I refer to the celebrated Dr. Mosheim, and to Dr. M'Laine, by whom his “Ecclesiastical History” has been brought within the reach of the English reader. “In the year 1541, John Calvin, who surpassed almost all the doctors of his

age, in laborious application, constancy of mind, force of eloquence, and extent of genius, returned to Geneva, from whence the opposition of his enemies had obliged him to retire. On his settlement in that city, the affairs of the new church were committed to his direction, and he acquired also a high degree of influence in the political administration of that republic. This event changed entirely the face of affairs, and gave a new aspect to the reformed church. The views and projects of this great man were grand and extensive, for he not only undertook to give strength and vigour to the rising church, by framing the wisest laws, and the most salutary institutions for the maintenance of order, and the advancement of true piety, but even proposed to render Geneva the mother, the seminary, of all the *reformed* churches, as Wittemberg was of all the Lutheran communities. He laid a scheme for sending forth from this little republic, the succours and ministers that were to promote and propagate the Protestant cause through the most distant nations, and aimed at nothing less than rendering the government, discipline, and doctrine of *Geneva*, the model and rule of imitation to the reformed churches throughout the world. The undertaking was certainly great, and worthy of the extensive genius and capacity of this eminent man; and great and arduous as it was, it was executed in part, nay, carried to a very considerable length, by his indefatigable assiduity, and unextinguishable zeal. It was with this view, that, by the fame of his learning, as well as by his epistolary

solicitations and encouragements of various kinds, he engaged many persons of rank and fortune, in France, Italy, and other countries, to leave the places of their nativity, and settle in Geneva; while others repaired thither merely out of a curiosity to see a man, whose talents and exploits had rendered him so famous, and to hear the discourses which he delivered in public. Another circumstance that contributed much to the success of his designs, was the establishment of an Academy at Geneva, which the senate of that city founded at his request, and in which he himself, with his colleague Theodore Beza, and other divines of eminent learning and abilities, taught the sciences with the greatest reputation. In effect, the lustre which these great men reflected on this infant seminary of learning, spread its fame through the distant nations with such amazing rapidity, that all who were ambitious of a distinguished progress in either sacred or profane erudition, repaired to Geneva, and that England, Scotland, France, Italy, and Germany, seemed to vie with each other in the number of their studious youth, that were incessantly repairing to the new Academy. By these means, and by the ministry of these his disciples, Calvin enlarged considerably the borders of the *reformed* church, propagated his doctrine, and gained proselytes and patrons to his theological system, in several countries of Europe. In the midst of this glorious career, he ended his days, in 1564; but the salutary institutions, and wise regulations, of which he had been the author, were both respected and maintained

after his death. In a more especial manner, the Academy of Geneva flourished as much under Beza, as it had done during the life of its founder." *Mosheim*, vol. 4th, page 374, &c.

Thus far Dr. Mosheim: in a note, under a previous notice of Calvin, the translator says of the reformer,—"A man, whose extensive genius, flowing eloquence, immense learning, extraordinary penetration, indefatigable industry, and fervent piety, placed at the head of the Reformers, all of whom he surpassed, at least in learning and parts, as," (I am sorry to say he adds unjustly,) "he also did the most of them in obstinacy, asperity, and turbulence." *Mosh.* vol. 4th, page 90.

The same divine influence, by the word and spirit of God, which raised to such eminence the leaders of the Reformation in Geneva, descended, in great abundance, on many in that favoured church; and it soon shone with a holy radiance, enlightening the regions around it, rendering it one of the brightest of those golden candlesticks among which, in this age, the Redeemer delighted to walk, and drawing to it, from all quarters, such as were desirous of profiting by its light. Geneva became the chosen asylum, not only of great numbers of refugees, whom the rigour of the times expelled from Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, and Britain, and who found within its walls protection, peace, christian hospitality, and heavenly wisdom; but also of those who wished to train themselves in the best existing school, for the functions of the holy ministry, and to endeavour to bring the churches to

which they belonged, into harmony with the Genevan model. The name of the great leader, right or wrong, was soon employed to designate the system of religious truth and ecclesiastical order, of which he was confessedly the most eminent expounder; and *Calvanism* has continued, from that day to this, to be the chief designation of evangelical belief throughout Protestant Christendom. How illustrious has this little State been! How exalted the station to which, in his sovereignty, it has pleased God to raise her! Surveying many large and powerful States, an ancient Genevese might have been disposed to exclaim, not in pride, but in praise, "Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever." Says the greatest modern Genevese writer, "God has given to each State its own peculiar vocation. The vocation of Geneva was in the Reformation. It was it which emancipated our city. It was it which, placing a great soul in a small body, enabled our State to resist powerful adversaries. It was it which gave to our republic arms, by means of which, although limited to a narrow territory, it caused its influence to be felt in Switzerland, in France, in Germany, in Holland, in England, in Scotland, in all the north, and even in the new world. The Reformation was Geneva."*

It is well known that our own illustrious Knox spent some time in this city, and there imbibed the lessons which on his return he taught his countrymen.

* D'Aubigné, *La Question de L'Eglise*, p. 5.

At a later period, subsequent to the death of Calvin, the scarcely less illustrious Melville resided there for years, was favoured with the confidence and love of Beza, and the other lights of that age, and even held a place as Professor, in the Genevan Academy. About that time no fewer than one hundred and twenty French ministers, refugees from their country, after the Bartholomew massacre, resided simultaneously in this favoured city.*

But we must keep ourselves from idols. We must not unduly exalt even the reformers and the reformation. There has unquestionably been found in every age, a very dangerous tendency to an idolatry of man, an idolatry which, as soon as it appeared in the primitive church, was rebuked with so much severity by the authority of an apostle.† Both in the British and in other churches, there has too often appeared a disposition to regard the reforming period as a standard, and to labour to bring back the church to that standard precisely. Let us hold fast the truth which the reformers proclaimed, but let us beware of adopting their errors; let us strive to imitate those christian graces by which their characters were adorned, but let us not consecrate their faults and failings. Calvin was neither Christ nor Paul; he was not an inspired or infallible authority; no human being ever rejected the claim of infallibility with greater indignation than he did; nor did he and his coadjutors ever

* M'Crie's Life of Melville, vol. 1. p. 33.

† 1 Cor. i.

dream that they had been enabled to achieve a perfect reformation. The great diversities in ecclesiastical order, and to *some* extent, (although happily that was small,) in doctrine also, which appeared among the reformers, was a sufficient demonstration, that in all things all were not right, and was a distinct warning afforded by providence to the churches, not to glory in men; but we must go farther, and affirm, that a close and candid inspection of the views and measures of those great and good men, will enable us to detect some errors of great magnitude, which perhaps contained the germs of those very evils which have subsequently troubled, and well-nigh ruined, the churches they were honoured to plant.

Let me advert to some of those errors, embodied as it appears to me, in the Genevan order, from the very beginning. I refer especially to the four following:—

1. There was an attempt suddenly to identify the Republic and the church of Geneva. The Republic was all Popish before; it was attempted to have it all Protestant now; in a word, to have all the members of the State members of the church also. Had this change been effected by conviction and conversion, it had been well; but speedier measures were resorted to. Within three or four years after the entrance of the Reformation, “the whole body of the citizens were called upon to take a solemn oath to renounce Popish rites and errors, and to live according to the rules of the gospel.” It is very justly remarked by the historian to whom I refer, that “this conversion of the country was too hasty and too interested

to be very sound.”* It is very true that Calvin arranged excellent measures for instructing the young, for preparing, as far as instruction and counsel could accomplish it, catechumens for full admission to the church, as well as for faithful dealings with those who, after admission, walked unworthily. Still, over all these precautionary measures, a prevailing determination reigned, that the whole State should be Protestant. The apostles did not so act in Jerusalem or elsewhere. The churches they formed consisted, not of the local population indiscriminately, but exclusively of the professed converts. Jerusalem was not the church. If we can judge from the language of Calvin, and the facts which history records, although there were many excellent of the earth in that church, the lives of multitudes were a reproach to the gospel. To such an extent did this immorality prevail, that the ministers for a time desisted from administering the Lord’s Supper—a determination which the pride of the people resented, by banishing Calvin and the other ministers from the Republic. On his recall, about two years after his exile, and when a spirit of penitence had very extensively shown itself, we find the Reformer thus addressing the Genevese:—“If you desire to have me for your pastor, correct the disorders of your lives. If you have with sincerity recalled me from my exile, banish the crimes and debauchery which prevail among you. I certainly cannot behold, without the most painful displeasure,

* Scott’s Swiss Reformation, pp. 309, 310.

within your walls, discipline trodden under foot, and crimes committed with impunity. I cannot possibly live in a place so grossly immoral. Vicious souls are too filthy to receive the purity of the gospel, and the spiritual worship which I preach to you. . . . I consider the principal enemies of the gospel to be, not the pontiff of Rome, nor heretics, nor seducers, nor tyrants, but such bad christians: because the former exert their influence out of the church, while drunkenness, luxury, perjury, blasphemy, impurity, adultery, and other abominable vices, overthrow my doctrine, and expose its defenders to the rage of our enemies. . . . Either command me to abandon a second time your town, and let me go and soften the bitterness of my afflictions in a new exile, or let the severity of the laws reign in the church. . . . Remove from within your walls, and from the frontiers of your State, the pest of your vices, and condemn them to a perpetual banishment.* These were warnings indignant and honest enough; but should those have ever been received into the church, and urged to bind themselves by solemn oath to live according to the gospel, to whom such reproofs were applicable? It is not in Geneva alone that this error has prevailed, nor has it been limited to the age of the Reformation. But its prevalence cannot be too deeply deplored, or too zealously resisted. An infallible decision on the spiritual state of others is beyond the reach of human judgment; and individuals may

* Scott, p. 340.

greatly err in judging of themselves: but to introduce, on principle, irreligious, that is, unconverted men into the christian church, in the hope that they may become religious afterwards, is a reckless experiment substituted by human folly in the room of the plain and wise appointment of Christ. To *believe with the heart unto righteousness*, is prior to *confession with the mouth unto salvation*, and without the former the latter is but vain illusion, injurious alike to the best interests of entrants to ecclesiastical communion, to the peace, purity, and influence of the body, and to the honour of the Divine Head.

2. The private members of the church of Geneva had too little to do with its affairs. It is true, Calvin may have suspected their competence, and have dreaded the influence of such persons as were thus characterized; but this is only an example of the tendency of one evil to produce another. Once flood the church with unsuitable members, and you have a pretext, if not a necessity, for denying to the whole the privileges of which only a part are capable. By the constitution of the Genevese church, for example, the election of the pastors was never vested in the members of the church. The "*Ordonnances*," in which the whole constitution and government of the church are fixed, makes the following arrangement in regard to this vital department of ecclesiastical order. I quote from the chapter entitled "Of the vocation of Pastors." (*De la vocation de Pasteurs.*) "In order that nothing may be done confusedly in the church, no one should be employed in

this charge without vocation; viz. examination, which is the chief; next, that which belongs to the appointment of ministers; (investing them with the office,) thirdly, what that form or ceremony is, which is fit for guarding their introduction to the ministry." After explaining the first two, the rule proceeds:—"First, the ministers among themselves choose one whom they esteem proper to serve with them in the ministry, proceeding in this according to the examination formerly mentioned. Then they make it known to the Small Council, (the Council of State,) which shall depute some of its number to hear the person referred to treat some portion of the Scripture, in the assembly of the ministers, in order to report to the Council. If the Council are not pleased, they proceed to a new election; if they are satisfied, they proceed to the vocation as follows. On Sabbath, it shall be made known to the people, in all the churches, that one is to be proposed, who has been chosen and approved according to the accustomed order in this church, to serve in the ministry; and notwithstanding, if any one knows any thing against his doctrine or life, he shall come and declare it to one of the Syndics, (chief magistrates) . . . in order that no one be introduced into the ministry without the consent of the whole church." The order then provides, that if "any thing is found by which he who has been elected is not capable," they shall proceed to a new election; but if no objection is offered, or found valid, he shall be received by prayer. He is afterwards to be presented to the Council, before whom he takes an oath of office. In

regard to elders, it was provided that they should be chosen by the council, with the advice of the ministers, and the consent of the Council of 200; that an opportunity should be given to the members of the church to object, as in the case of pastors; and that they also should take an oath of office before the magistracy. This order, it is evident, *vested the patronage in the pastors*, one of the most objectionable arrangements possible;—a patronage, as far as the people were concerned, checked only by their *veto*, or their alleging something culpable in the doctrine or life of the candidate, of the validity and evidence, however, of which allegations, the patrons themselves were the judges. Where such an order was acquiesced in, it is evident that the people must soon have become passive, and left it entirely to others to decide for them in a solemn transaction, involving, as far as human agency is concerned, the highest spiritual interests of themselves and of their offspring.

3. The alliance of the church with the State, the grand error of the reformed churches, was consummate in Geneva. These *Ordonnances* to which I have been referring were sanctioned by the Genevan State in the most formal and solemn manner, and were as much incorporated with the legislation of the Republic, as any part of their civil polity. The copy of these *Ordonnances* which I perused is entitled “Ecclesiastical Ordinances of the Church of Geneva, passed and reviewed in general council, the 3d of June, 1576;” and thus begins: “In the name of God Almighty. We the Syndics of the Small and Great Council, with

our people assembled, at the sound of the trumpet and of the great bell, following our ancient customs, . . . have ordained and established that we follow and preserve in our city and territory the Ecclesiastical Polity that follows." . . . &c.

In the same spirit, the pastors were appointed, and the elders chosen, as much by civil as by spiritual bodies. And the pecuniary support of the gospel was as much a matter of legal provision as that of the officers of the State.

From these facts it is plain, that in Geneva, as in the other reformed churches, the State judged and decided in sacred as in civil affairs—that what was bad in the Genevese ecclesiastical settlement had the sanction of law equally with what was good; the first being above the sanction of human law, and degraded by being placed under it; the second vitiating the national legislation and tending to perpetuate evil.

4. The Genevese church was intolerant; another error common to the reformed churches. This error resulted from the preceding. The creed of the church being the law of the State, it was alike imperative on all the citizens to observe it; to contradict the creed was a civil offence, punishable like other offences, by civil pains; to neglect ecclesiastical service was equal to the refusal of civil obedience; to form a new creed, or institute another church, was equivalent to the establishment of an *imperium in imperio*, was nothing less than sedition or rebellion, and could not be tolerated by the authorities of Geneva. As soon as the Reformers could accomplish it, the same mixing of civil

and sacred things, the same authority over the consciences of men, the same intolerance appeared. Thus at Geneva, the Republic issued “a general edict *enjoining* public worship to be conducted according to the rules of the gospel, and *prohibiting* all popish idolatry.”* The “Ordonnances” are abundantly express; providing legal severity as the ultimate antidote to all religious dissension and disorder. Thus, in the event of any difference in doctrine occurring among the ministers, it was enjoined “that these should first consider the matter among themselves; if that was not effectual, they should call in the elders to assist in appeasing the difference; and, finally, if they could not reach a peaceful conclusion on account of the obstinancy of one of the parties, that the cause should be referred to the magistrate to settle it.” (*Pour y mettre ordre.*) And how was he to settle it? Arguments were vain, for the offender is obstinate, and has shut his ears to them from both ministers and elders. Besides, argument is not the weapon of the magistrate; and (*punition*) punishment is what the *Ordonnances* require the magistrate to inflict. Thus, “judgment concerning punishment is always to be referred to the magistrate.” And what offences is the magistrate thus to visit? Almost every ecclesiastical offence whatever. “Heresy, schism, rebellion against the order of the church” . . . are to be (*punies par les loix*) “punished by the laws.” Whatever the Consistory requires the laws enforce. If any refuse to

* Scott, p. 304.

appear before the Consistory, the Council must oblige him—if one “dogmatize against the received doctrine”—or if another is “notoriously careless in attending preaching in the assembly of the faithful”—and do not hear the Consistory, to the magistrate must he go. So far did Calvin carry these enactments, that he seems to have rendered the neglect of the Lord’s Supper a civil crime. If, after ecclesiastical dealing with the negligent member, he still continued “for half a year without coming to the sacred Supper, being sent before the Council, (unless he ask pardon for his offences and be ready to amend it,) he shall be banished for one year from the city as incorrigible.” *

Nor were these and similar enactments left as dead letters in the statute book. Whether minor punishments were looked after I know not; but the heavier were not altogether neglected. Catholic worship was no more tolerated than theft. The Anabaptists, “who began to show themselves in the city almost as soon as the Reformation was established, and had even acquired partizans in the Council,” were opposed by the ministers in a public disputation; “and,” says the historian, “the Council being satisfied that they could not maintain their tenets from the scriptures, denounced a sentence of *banishment for life* against all who should attempt to teach their doctrines in Geneva.”† The historian does not record the passages of Scripture on which the Council rested this sentence of theirs.

* Ordonnances, chap. vi. liii. Tit. 3. chap. ii. 82, 88, 89, 91.

† Scott, 328.

But by far the most humiliating illustration of this intolerant spirit was afforded by the case of Servetus—a case to which every friend of the Reformation must ever turn with pain and shame. Into the particulars of this case I cannot enter. I was informed by Dr. D'Aubigné, that a distinguished member of the Historical Society of Geneva will soon publish an account of it. The adversaries of Calvin and of the Reformation have affirmed that the records of the process were purposely destroyed; it so happens, that in no judicial case have they been preserved with greater minuteness; and the public will soon be in possession of the whole details. To ascribe these proceedings to the temper and the revenge of Calvin, to impute to that great and good man any thing tortuous in his concern with the case, will appear to be the effect of ignorance or malice. But facts sufficiently lamentable are not to be disputed. Servetus was a native of Spain, born in the same year as Calvin. By profession he was a physician. But he wrote on theology; opposed the leading doctrines of christianity; and was regarded as an enemy of true religion. In the year in which he suffered, he was imprisoned for heresy by the Roman Catholic authorities, in Vienne in France; but, escaping from prison before his trial came on, he was condemned in his absence, and burnt in effigy, according to the usage of these times. He came to Geneva. He had corresponded with Calvin, knew his sentiments well, and was warned that if he came to Geneva he would not be suffered to escape. At the instance of one of Calvin's friends, and with his approbation, he

was seized, tried, and condemned. There was no haste, however, in the proceedings. The four Protestant cantons of Berne, Zurich, Basle, and Schaffhausen were consulted on the case, and their opinions were quite coincident with that of Geneva. Bucer, Ballinger, Farel, Viret, P. Martyr, Beza, were all of the same mind; "and even the mild and benevolent Melancthon wondered that any person could be found to disapprove the severity used." It is certain that Calvin used no hostile influence, beyond advising his commitment and trial; that after his conviction he uttered not a word concerning his punishment, except that he endeavoured, but in vain, to change the mode of his death. The unhappy man was burned alive on the 27th of October, 1553—a dark day in the history of Geneva, and of the Reformation.

I do not plead in excuse for this legal murder, that the error in which it originated was that of the age, and that those concerned in it, like Saul the persecutor, thought they were doing God service. Popery had poisoned the moral atmosphere of the nations, and it was long ere the Reformers were purged from the contagion. Our own Knox, be it remembered, induced the Scottish Parliament to enact, that whosoever said mass, or received mass, or was present thereat, should, for the third offence, be punished with death. So late as the age of James I. (the VI. of Scotland,) two Arians were burnt in England for heresy.* And the enormities of Mary against the Protestants, and of the

* Hume's Appendix to the reign of James I.

Stuarts against the Nonconformists of England, and the Presbyterians of Scotland, (to say nothing of the capricious and tyrannical severities of Henry and Elizabeth,) are matters of household history. Nor has the spirit or the practice of persecution for conscience sake been ever separated from any civil establishment of religion, nor, I believe, can it be separated. Those who *seek* the temporal kingdom would still wish the power of commanding fire from heaven; those who *have obtained* that kingdom, in the absence of celestial fire, will find some other of their own kindling.

I think I have now said enough to show that all was not right in the original constitution of this church; that with great doctrinal purity, and vital piety, it associated not a little that was erroneous and injurious in principle and spirit; that its exclusion of the members of the church from all management in their own affairs, tended to introduce a general listlessness; that in spite of a vigilant discipline, the unworthy were all but compelled to enter its fellowship; that its fell alliance with the secular power could not but accelerate the process of corruption; while the violence and intolerance of these civil enactments by which the system was enforced, could not fail to produce an extensive hypocrisy on the part of many conformists, and, on the part of others, a secret and strong dislike, and growing impatience of a system, which they felt to be all but intolerable.

By these, and doubtless by other influences combining, the doctrinal purity and the living piety of the Genevan church most lamentably declined. The

gold that was in it became dim indeed, the fine gold was changed. If no church stood higher at one period, assuredly none has fallen lower at another. Once, a centre of light, afterwards enveloped in darkness; in her beginning, a fountain of living water for her own and others' supply, then a poisoned stream, spreading disease and death among the people.

Calvin and his contemporaries had many eminent successors; and the church and academy of Geneva retained, I believe, for more than a century after the death of the Reformer, the high position in which he had left them. But towards the end of the seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth century, a lamentable change took place. Benedict Pictet, whose "*Theologie Chrétienne*" is well known in this country, and who died about 1734, is always referred to as the last of their great men. Alphonse Turretine, an eminent writer, was among the first who introduced a new theology into the pulpit and the chair. He was an Arminian, if not an Arian. He taught Israel to sin; and with a fatal success. Alphonse Turretine was born in 1671; he became a minister in Geneva, and subsequently a professor, first of church history, and afterwards of divinity, and died in the year 1737.* There must have been diffused throughout the church by this time some predisposition to apostacy; some departure from first love to Christ and his truth; for it does not appear that the pastors or that the Consistory bestirred themselves, or that the church, moved

* Preface to his *Dissertations on Natural Theology*.

with holy zeal for the injured honour of their Lord and his gospel, adopted any decisive measures to arrest the progress of evil. Thus it went, as might be expected in such circumstances, from evil to worse. Vernet, a professor of theology, and whose "System of Theology" became a standard work in the academy, went the whole length of Socinus, and held that our Lord was a mere man. Says a recent writer, "His successor in the chair proclaimed to his scholars, ex cathedra, '*Faites de Jesus Christ tout ce que vous voulez ; mais ne l'en faites pas Dieu.*' 'Make of Jesus Christ what you will; only don't make him God.'" Well might the infidel Encyclopædie of France boast that Geneva had become "a perfect Socinianism, rejecting every thing under the name of mysteries, and distinguished from mere Deism by scarcely any thing more than respect for Jesus Christ and the Scriptures." I may add, in the words of the writer from whom I have been quoting—"It is true the Company (of Pastors) are unwilling fully to admit the charge (of Socinianism); but neither have they ventured to deny it; they maintain silence, and wish it to be accounted a dignified liberality. But they have been careful to remove from their church every thing which might disturb a Socinian peace; their translation of the bible, liturgy, and catechisms, has been systematically reduced to the level of that view of christianity; they have formally prohibited the promulgation of those articles of belief which it rejects; they have indefinitely suspended a minister for faithfully preaching the doctrines of all orthodox churches; and, lastly, they have

now deposed the same individual from his office in the university, because he made use of the bible in the religious instruction of his class."* Thus Geneva fell, a warning to all the churches! What a fulfilment of the almost prophetic words which Calvin addressed from his death-bed to the Syndics and Senators whom he sent for, to give them his last counsel and benediction. "With respect to his doctrine, he solemnly declared that he had not taught rashly and uncertainly, but had delivered purely and sincerely the word of God, with which he was put in trust. . .

. And this, said he, I am the more anxious to testify, because I cannot doubt that Satan, as his practice is, will raise up heady, light-minded, ungodly men, to corrupt the sound doctrine which you have heard from me."†

It may be interesting to state more particularly some leading facts respecting this deplorable defection of the Genevese church. It would appear that the declension was gradual, one step leading to another, and emboldening the ministers to take it. "Others," says one writer, "have traced out a gradual sinking of doctrine, from the institutions of Calvin, the Helvetic Confession, and the Synod of Dort; through the Arminianism of one professor of divinity, and the Arianism of another, to the 'christianized deism' of the present pastors and their flock."‡ (This was

* Documents relative to the deposition of the Rev. C. Malan, p. 11.

† Scott, p. 392.

‡ Documents, &c., p. 10.

written in 1820.) Says another, "It is not necessary for our purpose to trace out the successive declensions of the church of Geneva, from the faith of Calvin, through the different stages of Arminianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, which took place under the influence of Jean Alphonse Turretine, and Professor Vernet and his followers; and, in the end, entirely subverted its original constitution, its discipline excepted. Suffice it to say, that these barriers which Calvin raised to prevent the inroads of novel and false doctrines, have long since been broken down—subscription to a public confession of faith dispensed with—the catechism changed—the translation of the bible revised—and the tone of public instruction lowered, until even the doctrines of original sin, of the atonement, and of the influence of divine grace, are barely recognized—the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father denied—and for the most part the high and holy principles of the gospel superseded by a barren system of ethics." *

Early in the last century, the terms of admission to the ministry were relaxed; the candidates only binding themselves to regulate their doctrine by the bible, with a vague reference to their catechism. "In 1725, the Company of Pastors, in agreement with the Counsel of State, bound itself to prescribe to candidates this truly christian rule. You promise to preserve (*de garder*) the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, as it is contained in the books of the Old and New Testa-

* Reviewer Reviewed, p. 7. London, 1821.

ment, of which we have an abridgment in our catechism."*

Another step was to change this catechism. The catechism of Calvin was in exact harmony with his Institutes, and with the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, giving distinct prominence to the leading doctrines of the gospel. The catechism was entirely new modelled, and the vital doctrines of Christianity were utterly suppressed; and this unchristianized document became, and is, the only creed of the Genevese church.

It will be observed, that changes are alluded to as having been made by the Company on the liturgy, and the translation of the scriptures, as well as the catechism, favourable to Arianism. In regard to the first, I had not the means of verifying it by personally inspecting and comparing editions of the Genevese liturgy; but in answer to a series of queries which I presented in writing to an esteemed clerical friend in Geneva, of which queries this was one, "Was the liturgy altered?" I had the following short and decisive reply,—“It has been much altered. One need only look at the first page, containing the confession of sins, and read at each service.”

In regard to the catechism, the evidence is but too evident and ample. I have in my possession a copy of that book as it is now used; I have examined it with care; and I find that the doctrines of the divinity of the Lord Jesus, the personality and divinity of

* Cheneviere, Ess. vol. ii. p. 116.

the Holy Spirit, original sin, regeneration by the grace of the Spirit of God, and justification in the ordinary and scriptural sense of the word, have no place in that document. Two examples may suffice to give some idea of the sort of doctrine which this catechism is employed to teach. Of the fall of man, and its effects, the following two questions with the answers, comprehend their whole doctrine on these essential truths of bible religion. "What prohibition did God give to Adam and Eve?—God, willing to let them know their dependence, forbade them to eat of the fruit of a tree, called *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Did they observe this prohibition? No: so God, to punish them, drove them from the garden of Eden, and subjected them to the miseries of this life, and to death." * The second relates to the salvation which, according to them, Jesus Christ bestows on sinners, and from respect to which, the name *Saviour* is applied to him. It is contained in the following question and answer. "How has Jesus saved us from our sins?—1. In announcing to us, and in confirming to us, by his death, the pardon of our sins, upon the condition of repentance;—2. In offering to us in his doctrine, in his example, and in the aids of the Holy Spirit, the means of sanctifying us, and of meriting salvation." † Thus the malady and the remedy are alike unknown in the gospel of modern Geneva. *For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own*

* Cat. pp. 5, 6.

† Ibid. p. 76.

righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Unhappy men! they have not stood in awe of that inspired denunciation, recorded by the apostle against him who, were he an angel from heaven, should teach *another gospel, which is not another!*

I have not a copy of the entire Bible as used in the church, and sanctioned by the Pastors of Geneva; but I have their edition of the New Testament, published in 1835, the Trecentenary of the Reformation in that city, which was celebrated with great pomp by these apostates from its doctrines. This version has been prepared by the Company, and very much resembles the "Improved version," (Unitarian,) as it has been called in this country. In their preface, they enumerate, naturally enough, among the difficulties with which they had to contend, in their labours as translators, "*those which flow from circumstances, particularly diverse doctrinal prepossessions, which some are so apt to suspect in others;*" and in opposition to which, they protest and parade their impartiality and candour. As examples of the influence of these *doctrinal prepossessions*, I adduce the three following, on the all-important doctrine of the eternal divinity of the Son of God. To the passage John i. 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God,*" they append this brief note, "*or a divine being;*" (*ou, un être divin.*) A divine being, not *the* divine being; a god, not God; a divine being in the sense of M. Cheneviere, their leader, "If an

angel descended on earth, a messenger of heavenly counsels, we should see in him *a* divine being.”— Again, to the passage, Romans, ix. 5, in which the Apostle so plainly asserts the two natures in the person of the Redeemer, as distinctly predicating divinity of the one, as humanity of the other, and expressing the former in an act of divine adoration, they also add a note, in which, like other Unitarians, they endeavour to set aside this testimony to our Lord’s divinity, by arbitrarily breaking the one sentence into two, and representing the adoration as addressed, not to Christ, but to the Father, “of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Their note is, “*or, Christ who is over all. God be blessed for ever, Amen.*” The third passage is Phil. ii. 6. “Who, being in the form of God, *thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*” Disregarding alike the design and sense of the entire passage, and the meaning of the words in the important clause put in italics, they insert, not a translation, but a substituted sentiment of their own, in the following terms, “was not prevailed upon to equal himself to God.” (*Ne s’en est point prevalu pour s’égaler a Dieu.*) Most marvellous humility, truly, in one, as dependent on God, according to their doctrine, as we are! A potent example, indeed, for us, and a fit subject for the highest eulogy and admiration, by an inspired writer!

It was with mingled feelings of sorrow and indignation, that, on entering Calvin’s pulpit, I found this Arian version of the scriptures there! The great

Reformer, and all that honoured band of witnesses by which the age of the Reformation was distinguished, placed all their hopes of salvation in a Redeemer who is Divine. Their boasted successors would remove this only hope of the fallen, and lay another and fallacious foundation in its room. But in vain; for the voice of the Redeemer, "full of majesty—full of grace and truth," will prove mightier and more effectual than the proudest oracles of presumptuous men, and will continue to fix the faith, and to command the homage of his followers of every kindred, and nation, and people, and tongue. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." For "*he is over all, God blessed for ever.*"

It is with much satisfaction I have to add, that the British and Foreign Bible Society have repudiated all alliance with the authors and circulators of this version. In the words of the friend to whom I have referred, "The British and Foreign Bible Society publicly broke with the Bible Society of Geneva, on account of this version."

A very bold tone was still farther assumed by the Company, and by leading members of it. Examples of the latter have already been referred to. I give the following as an example of the doctrine taught by M. Cheneviere, one of the pastors of the church, and Professor of Theology in the Academy at this day. The work from which I quote, is entitled "Essays," and was published in 1831, at which time M. Cheneviere was in possession of both the offices which he has continued to hold. "If an angel descended on earth, a messenger

of heavenly counsels, we should see in him *a divine being*. (*un être divin.*) The Redeemer is superior to the angels, and to all other intelligent creatures. God has sovereignly exalted him on account of his obedience; we acknowledge that Jesus is *a divine being*, and thus we confess his divinity; but we deny that Jesus is the eternal, the creator of the heavens and the earth. This is the opinion which the Athanasians hold; and it is this which we oppose in the following work." And again, "of the Trinity, . . . This system includes three ideas, there exists only one divine essence, or only one God—there are three persons in this essence, one, and not divided—they have amongst them one nature, common and infinite. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Therefore there is but one God. To proceed with order, I go to prove, 1. That this theological system of the Trinity is contrary to the general opinion of the primitive church.—2. That it is contrary to reason.—3. To the Holy Scripture." * Such has been, such is, the doctrine of the pulpit and of the chair in Geneva. There young and old in this fallen church, the congregations as they assemble, and the candidates for the ministry in the academy, are taught to degrade infinitely the Lord of the church, and either to deny all worship to Him whom all the angels of God adore, or to commit idolatry by the worship of a creature. Yet the Company of Pastors, "Venerable"

* Essais Theologiques, par M. Cheneviere, Pasteur et Professeur a Geneve, 1831, pp. 3, 4.

as they call themselves,—the Court of the Consistory, sworn to guard the truth,—the people of Geneva, all are silent against this blasphemer of the Son of God.

But the Company of Pastors have gone farther than this. It was not enough to allow these fatal errors to be taught; it was not enough that they themselves taught them; it did not suffice to expunge from their catechism the living doctrines of salvation; they attempted to bind every candidate for the ministry to suppress those doctrines; and they proceeded to act with tyrannical severity when their order was disobeyed.

The following is the order to which I refer, and which was passed in the year 1817. “The Company of Pastors of the church of Geneva, penetrated with a spirit of humility, of peace, and of christian charity, and convinced that the circumstances in which it finds the church committed to its care, demand, on its part, measures of prudence and wisdom, decrees, without pretending to pass any judgment on the ground of the questions following, without interfering, in any manner, with liberty of opinions, to secure, whether in regard to candidates who ask to be consecrated to the holy ministry, or in regard to ministers who shall aspire to exercise, in the church of Geneva, the pastoral functions, an engagement of which this is the tenor:—

“We promise to abstain, while we reside, and when we preach, in the churches of the Canton of Geneva, from establishing, whether in one entire discourse, or in a part of a discourse directed to this end, our opinion—

“ 1. On the manner in which the divine nature is united to the person of Jesus Christ.

“ 2. On original sin.

“ 3. On the manner in which grace operates; or on effectual grace.

“ 4. On predestination.

“ We also promise not to oppose, in our discourses, the opinion of any pastor or minister on these matters. Finally, we engage, if we shall be led to utter our thoughts on any of these subjects, to do so without enlarging on our own opinions, avoiding expressions foreign to the holy scriptures, and availing ourselves, as far as possible, of the terms which they employ.”

That this order was authoritative has been but too apparent. M. Cheneviere speaks of it in the following terms.—“ This prohibitive *rule which they have imposed*, (*regle prohibitive qu'ils ont imposée*), in 1817, on all those who preach in the churches of the canton; and which he defends on the plausible ground” of its being “ a mean of peace,” (*un moyen de paix*.)” *

But it is not from the words of this man, that we chiefly learn the determination of the Company. That anti-christian determination was proclaimed in certain tyrannical proceedings, by which some of the most faithful and eminent servants of Christ of whom modern Geneva can boast, were expelled from their church. I refer to the proceedings in the two cases of Dr. Malan first, and Dr. Gaussen next; which the enemies of the gospel meant for the suppression of

* Essais vol. ii. p. 117.

the truth, but which it has pleased God, in the holy and benevolent arrangements of that providence which has so often caused the wrath of man to praise him, to subordinate to its defence and furtherance. These proceedings are so important, that I shall reserve them for separate consideration.

Meanwhile, what has been the practical result among the great body of the Genevese of this apostasy of the pastors? In the righteous judgment of God, infidelity from without was permitted to cooperate with this virtual infidelity within the church. The malignant genius of Voltaire, who established his impure abode within five miles of this city, employed itself restlessly in assailing all religious belief; while the bewitching licentiousness of his friend and contemporary Rousseau, assailed in the most seducing forms, all practical morality. All France was affected by the poison of Ferney and Neufchatel; and no great and suitable effort was made to neutralize its influence on unhappy Geneva.

And if we are to judge of piety by practice, and if we take veneration for the Sabbath as an indication of piety, I know not that I have ever seen, except among the lowest and most profligate classes of British society, such general and unblushing desecration of this sacred day, as Geneva even now exhibits. It seems to be the chosen day for general festivity. Their *fetes*, on land and on water, are generally on that day. The city seems to turn out for recreation. Minor amusements are seen in all directions. Billiards are rattling amidst the loud laugh of the players.

The theatre is open; and other public shows are frequented by crowds. Nor, I fear, do you hear in many quarters such expressions of sorrow or indignation, as this overt desecration of the Lord's day is fitted to inspire. It is true there is a remnant, we shall see a growing remnant, who "sigh and cry," for these evils: but, alas, that number is small. It is true there is a considerable habit of church-going, and a great rush to the communion at the festivals; but can one help, in such circumstances, to call to mind the words of the prophet? "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meetings." Isaiah i. 11—13.

The following sketch, by a shrewd and able tourist, was written last year. "I happened to be at Geneva one Sunday morning, as the bells were tolling to church. The very sounds which once called the powerful minds of a Calvin, a Knox, a Zuingli, to religious exercise and meditation, were now summoning the descendants of their contemporaries, to the same house of prayer. There are few Scotchmen whose hearts would not respond to such a call. I hastened to the ancient Cathedral, the church of St. Peter, to see the pulpit from which Calvin had

preached, to sit, possibly in the very seat from which John Knox has listened ; to hear the pure doctrines of christianity from the preachers who now stand where once the great champions of the reformation stood ; to mark, too, the order and observances of the Calvinistic service here in its native church ; to revive, too, in my mind, Scotland, and the picturesque Sabbath-days of Scotland, in a foreign land. But where is the stream of citizens' families in the street, so remarkable a feature in every Scotch town, when the bells are tolling to church ; family after family, all so decent and respectable in their Sunday clothes ; the fathers and mothers leading the younger children, and all walking silently churchwards ? And where the quiet, the repose, the stillness, of the Sabbath morning, so remarkable in every Scotch town and house ? Geneva, the seat and centre of Calvinism, the fountain-head from which the pure and living waters of our Scottish Zion flow ; the earthly source, the pattern, the Rome of our Presbyterian doctrine and practice, has fallen lower from her own original doctrine and practice, than ever Rome fell. Rome has still superstition ; Geneva has not even that semblance of religion. In the head church of the original seat of Calvinism, in a city of 25,000, (30,000) souls, at the only service on the Sabbath-day, there being no evening service, I sat down in a congregation of about two hundred females, and twenty-three males, mostly elderly men of a former generation, with scarcely a youth or boy, or working man among them. A meagre liturgy, or printed form of prayer, a sermon,

which, as far as religion was concerned, might have figured the evening before at some geological society, as an 'ingenious essay' on the Mosaic chronology; a couple of psalm tunes on the organ, and a waltz to go out with, were the church service. In the afternoon, the only service in town or in the country, is reading a chapter of the Bible to the children, and hearing them gabble over the catechism in a way which shows they have not a glimpse of the meaning. A pleasure tour in the steam-boats, which are regularly advertised for a Sunday promenade round the lake, a pick-nick dinner in the country, and overflowing congregations in the evening at the theatre, the equestrian circus, the concert saloons, ball-rooms and coffee-houses, are all that distinguish Sunday from Monday," &c. *

I read this paragraph to a grave and well-informed Genevese. He raised his hands, hung and shook his head, and said, "Oh, it is too true, too true! But a *waltz*, I have never surely heard a waltz." "What have you heard then?" I asked. "Only a march!"

O, if Calvin were again permitted to visit his beloved Geneva, to listen to the harangues from its pulpits, to hear the prelections from that chair which he once filled and adorned, or to look on the streets of the city and its surrounding fields on the day of sacred rest, with what sorrow, with what shame, with what holy indignation, with what burning zeal would his sainted spirit be inspired! But it belongs to another than

* Notes of a Traveller, by Samuel Laing, Esq., p. 324, &c.

Calvin to estimate fully the extent of that melancholy change which the Genevan church has undergone; and it is cheering to reflect that He is able to accomplish what his most gifted and faithful servants cannot, to turn again its long captivity in error and sin, “as the streams in the south”—to heal all its backslidings—and to pour upon it from on high the free and reviving influences of his divine favour.

CHAPTER III.

THE DECLINE OF RELIGION IN GENEVA, CONTINUED.

It was not enough that the pastors of Geneva had themselves apostatized from the religion of the Bible, and that they bound those whom they admitted to office to preserve a fatal silence on saving truth; it remained to be seen how they would enforce conformity, and punish by deprivation or exclusion, such friends of the gospel as it might please God to raise up. I shall adduce two cases, in illustration of the unhappy zeal of these men in the cause of error.

The first is that of the Rev. Dr. Malan; an able and devoted servant of the Lord Jesus, with whose character and writings many Christians in this country have been long acquainted.

Mr. M. was admitted to the office of the ministry in the year 1814; but was never a pastor in the church. He was admired, however, as an eloquent and attractive preacher; and had he become subservient to the views and commands of the Company, he would

soon have been invited to take part with them as a pastor. Meanwhile, he was one of the Regents in the College, and taught with much acceptance and success.

For some years after he held the office of the ministry, he was himself ignorant of saving truth, a blind leader of the blind; and in a beautiful preface to a volume of discourses, in the French language, which he published in 1838, he bewails that ignorance; gives, with great contrition, outlines of sermons which he then preached, with high approbation by pastors who heard them, but in which he taught another gospel; and respecting the errors of which, he elsewhere says, "it is not at all surprising that having been originally educated, and by subsequent studies established, in Arianism and Pelagianism, my religious instructions should have been tainted with these heresies." *

But about the end of 1815, and the beginning of 1816, it pleased God to open his eyes, to turn him from darkness to light, and to give him the knowledge of the way of salvation, by the grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Mr. M. was not slow to confess with the mouth what with the heart he believed, and in place of salvation by works, to preach Christ and him crucified, as the only hope of man; and he availed himself of such opportunities as were granted to him to declare, with great fervour, the truth as it is in Jesus. "I had great joy," he says, "in doing this,

* Documents relative to the Deposition of the Rev. C. Malan, p. 33.

and I persuaded myself, that the delight which filled my own soul, by the view of the grace of God in Jesus, would have been participated by all who heard me." In this hope, so natural to a sanguine and new convert, he was soon undeceived. The people were displeased, the pastors were furious, and Mr. M. was soon taught that such doctrine was not to be tolerated in the church of Geneva. In the month of March, 1817, a faithful and powerful discourse gave such offence to the people, that he says of the effect of it, "when the preacher descended from the pulpit and went out of the church, . . . no mouth was opened to speak to him; no hand came to seize his; and the same minister who, a few months before, was praised because he had offered incense to human virtue, on leaving the church where he had been giving the glory to the love of God in Jesus Christ, he passed through the midst of a crowd of his fellow-citizens, as a soldier who has been dismissed with stripes, or as a malefactor bearing some badge of infamy."* And as to the sentiments of the pastors, Mr. M. adds, "In fact, two days after this sermon, which I repeated on the following day in another church, *an order* was intimated to me, not to repeat in the pulpit *the erroneous doctrine* which I had been delivering; and, on my replying that I could not preach but according to my belief, *all the pulpits were interdicted me*. This lasted until the month of August in the following year, when, for the last time in the churches of Geneva, having

* Le Témoignage de Dieu, p. 28.

preached in the cathedral a sermon on faith, in which I proved that good works are those which the Spirit of God produces in a regenerated soul, and that it is faith which yields these saving fruits, I was finally deprived of the use of the pulpits." *

But the conduct of the ministers, in regard to his place in the College, was still more decided and violent. I have perused attentively the published documents in this case, and the few facts which follow, are all of them derived from these remarkable papers. Mr. M. did not confine his religious instructions in the class to the catechism of the church, from which we have seen the leading doctrines of christianity were gradually expunged; he brought these saving truths before the minds of his pupils after they had been discovered by himself, and he employed the holy scriptures as well as the catechism in his class. What was the conduct of the Genevese pastors toward this daring Regent? He is first most formally interrogated by the Moderator and the Rector of the Academy, who, among other inquiries, demand, "*Why he made use of the bible in the religious instruction of his class?*—why, in those instructions, he had altered the College Catechism?—what principles he followed in his religious instruction?" &c.; and was then firmly told, that "the duties of his situation required him to follow in his instructions the book received and prescribed—namely, the Catechism." † The Moderator and Rector were not slow to bring the subject before the Com-

* Le Témoignage de Dieu, p. 29.

† Documents, pp. 2, 3.

pany; and the following communication was forthwith made to Mr. M.:—"That the Catechism actually used by the College of our city, be learned and explained in his class, such as it is, without his being allowed to maintain, by *comments*, *any* doctrine which is not expressly taught in it; that the society does not think fit that my scholars, considering their age, should be introduced to an acquaintance with truths which are not evident to every one, and are most undoubtedly far above their capacity; such, for instance, as the following:—That our Lord Jesus Christ created the world; and that I ought to confine myself strictly to a statement of the doctrine which the Catechism contains." It is highly honourable to Mr. M. that, so far from concealing from his superiors the obnoxious doctrines he taught his pupils, he most distinctly stated what these doctrines were; and both in his first interrogation by the Moderator and Rector, in a long communication to the Rector afterwards, and in a spirited address to the Council of State, he not only declares but defends the hated doctrines. It deserves to be noticed here, that Mr. M. was now placed in circumstances of severe trial. On the one hand, to remain in the church of Geneva, would have insured to him the continuance of employment in the College, a speedy admission into the pastorate, sufficient emolument, and general favour; for at this period the ministers (or, as we would denominate them, the preachers,) were not, as now, introduced to the pastorate, not from regard to their fitness and merit as understood by the Company,

but simply according to their seniority as ministers. On the other hand, he saw nothing before him, if he abode by his convictions, except final exclusion from every pulpit, expulsion from the College, the cessation for the time of every means of support for himself and his family, with the indignant discountenance of the government and the people of Geneva. Cost what it might, the mind of Mr. M. was made up. He honestly and nobly confessed that Saviour before men, who, we doubt not, will confess him before his Father and his holy angels. He went forth to Christ without the camp, bearing his reproach. In his conversation with the Moderator and Rector, he said "his principles were entirely Calvinistic; that he taught in conformity to the Catechism of Calvin, according to the Confession of Faith of the Synod of Dordrecht, and the Confession of Geneva." In his written communication to the Rector, he is still more definite. His words are, "I have taught my scholars, and endeavoured to make them understand, as far as their age allowed, and always with caution on mysterious subjects, the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, namely, that there is but one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that man is born in a state of sin; that he cannot be delivered from it but by the new birth, the operation of the Holy Ghost; that the salvation of man is a gift absolutely gratuitous, which God bestows by his Son on the sinners whom it pleases him to save; and that our good works are the evidence of our gratitude to our Saviour, and have no merit to

redeem our souls." * In another communication to the Rector, he defends those propositions, as he does in his letter to the Council.

The results were sufficiently brief and decisive. These doctrines must not be taught; and because Mr. M. will not abstain from teaching them, he must be excluded from the pulpits and the College of Geneva. The language of the Company is as weak as it is unchristian and intolerant. I cannot avoid quoting the following notes entire from the Company to Mr. M.

"SIR,—I last Friday complied with your desire by communicating to the Venerable Academical Company the letter you addressed to me in the morning. The Academical Company, Sir, recognises in your letter the frankness and fidelity which it expected of you, and which ought to characterise a minister of the God of truth; but, on the other hand, it appears to it most extraordinary, that any one should take for the foundation, not only of the religious instruction he gives to young children, but even of the moral exhortations he is in the habit of addressing to them, the most abstruse and delicate questions of theology; and those on the solution of which the Doctors have not yet arrived, and will probably never arrive, at an unanimous agreement. A method of instruction so disproportioned to the tender age of those to whom it is given, has a tendency to break the spirit of children, and fill them with alarms, the possible consequences of which one

* Documents, pp. 7—9.

cannot calculate without apprehension. This method, Sir, is moreover directly opposed to our customs, and to the species of instruction which was prescribed to you, when you were entrusted with the care of the Fifth Class. The Academical Company charges me, then, Sir, to declare to you expressly its desire—that, whether in your religious instructions, or your habitual exhortations, you will not advance to your pupils any of the propositions stated in the Confession of Faith contained in your letter; and on which the Catechism it is your duty to hear the children repeat, in no respect obliges you to explain your sentiments. This book furnishes sublime and irrefragable truths enough, to form the young minds who study it to piety and virtue. You will be pleased, Sir, to inform me, within fifteen days, whether you are disposed to conform to the rule the Academy has charged me to prescribe you. Accept the sincere expression of my esteem, my real regard, and my former affection.

“THE RECTOR OF THE ACADEMY.”

“GENEVA, *September*, 14, 1818.”

To this communication, worthy, indeed, of its authors, Mr. M. replied in a long letter worthy of himself, in which after re-avowing and vindicating the truth and importance of these doctrines of our salvation which the rulers of the Genevese church thus wished to consign to silence and oblivion, Mr. M. concludes with these words:—“Yes, Sir, it would be unprecedented for a christian master to teach any other principles than those of christianity, for the direction of

youthful souls, and thus to rob them of *the meat which endureth unto everlasting life*. (John vi. 27.) Truth must have been expelled our church before the sacred doctrines which I have professed could be rejected, and reason and human philosophy placed upon the altar instead of the Holy Bible and Faith. . . . I do not hesitate to say, that I will never direct the children by any other rule than this holy book; and that faithful on all occasions to the eternal principles it lays down, and taking my conscience before God as my sole guide, I will neglect no means of bringing the souls, over whom I have any influence, and of whatever age they may be on this earth, to Him, *who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*; (1 Cor. i. 30.) and in whom alone dwells true knowledge, and the true dignity of man. This, Mr. Rector, is the answer which I have the honour to convey through you, to the Venerable Academical Company; submitting to it my very humble request, that it will be pleased to judge me, *as in the presence of the Lord*."

Nothing moved by the reasonings and appeals of their brother, and intent on extinguishing gospel light in Geneva, and within two days after receiving Mr. M.'s letter, he received from the secretary of the Company the following note addressed to him.

"SIR,—The Venerable Academical Company enjoins you to conform strictly to the Catechism adopted for the religious instruction of children, and in your instructions, direct, or indirect, to abstain from any

comment different from that Catechism. Such is the resolution which the Venerable Academical Company made in its sitting of yesterday, and which I am charged, as secretary, to communicate to you.—I have the honour to be, &c.”*

On the part of the Company this was final. To give effect to their sentence, however, the usages of Geneva require the confirmatory sentence of the Council of State. This was soon obtained; and the manner in which Mr. M. notices the fact affords an illustration of the misgivings of nature with which civilians have often enforced the decisions of heartless and wicked priests. The following is the short and simple narrative. “The second of November, the First Syndic requested me by note to wait upon him; and in a long and very affectionate conversation, urged the most pressing arguments to modify my determination. He then communicated to me the order of the Noble Council of State, to submit to what was required of me by the Venerable Academical Company; and assured me of the grief he experienced at finding me still unwilling to comply. Two days after the Noble Council of State confirmed the resolution of the Venerable Academical Company. The following Friday, at six in the evening, the Principal of the College sent for me, and read me the following words:—‘The Venerable Academical Company desires the Principal to notify to Mr. M. that the Noble Council of State has declared his office

* Documents, pp. 15—24. pass.

vacant; to permit him, if he wishes, to read the extract from the registers of the Council, and to provide after to-morrow for the provisional supply of the Regency of the Fifth.' " *

I have only to add, that the spirit with which this faithful and injured Christian received this decision cannot be better expressed than in his own simple words when anticipating it. "Let, then, the Venerable Academical Company act in this matter, as to its own prudence and wisdom shall seem expedient. If it decide that I ought to be deprived of the situation, which was confided to me by other authority than its own, and confirmed to me by itself; I shall regard its decision as an expression of the sovereign and ever adorable will of Him, who alone directs all the events of the world. I shall be deprived by it of an employment which is the sole support of my family; I shall find myself without any apparent resource; but, full of confidence, by his grace, in Christ, into whose hands all things are committed, I shall submit with devotion to all He may think proper to assign to me." †

But Dr. Malan has not been the only victim of the intolerant heresiarchs of Geneva. In the years 1830, 1831, they instituted processes, and adopted decisions, in character similar to those by which Dr. Malan was expelled from their church. These processes were two, and really distinct; but as one of the three brethren, who was alone in the first, was also a chief object in

* Documents, p. 47.

† Documents, pp. 11, 12.

the second of these processes, and as the two are so similar in their spirit and results, in this brief notice I shall include both.

The Rev. Dr. Gaussen, well known to many in Britain as the excellent and able author of various works, particularly of his chief production, *Theopneustia*, had been pastor of the parish of Santigny, in the canton of Geneva, from the year 1815. About the time of his entrance into the ministry, he had been brought to the saving knowledge of the truth, and was one of the very few in the church of Geneva who preached Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Becoming more and more dissatisfied with the Catechism to which I have before referred, Mr. G. had ceased to use it in the instructions he imparted to the youth in his parish, to the candidates for admission to communion, and in these public catechetical discourses which the usage of Geneva prescribes. Dr. G. had two reasons in particular for adopting this change; and he did not hesitate to assign them both, when interrogated by the Company respecting his conduct. The first was, that the Catechism suppressed the leading truths of the gospel; and the second was, that even as far as it was unexceptionable, (in regard to facts and duties,) it was very ill adapted to interest and instruct the young. In regard to the first, his words are, "Without entering, at present, into any development on this mournful subject, it is enough to say, that the four truths of the divinity of Jesus Christ, of the moral fall of man, of the justification of the sinner by faith in the blood of Christ, and, finally, of his regeneration

by the Holy Spirit, these four truths, the foundation of christianity, and so clearly established in our ancient Catechisms, have been, by successive alterations, excluded from the one which would now be imposed upon me."* As to the second, I cannot wonder that Dr. G. objected to it as "so abstract, and so dry, that it produced in the youth a disgust of religion, and never spoke to their heart."† (*Ne lui parle jamais au cœur.*) It is a long production, formed apparently on the principle that the quantity should compensate for the quality, containing about 800 questions, many of the answers being very long, and extending to 212 pages 12mo, closely printed; rather ponderous assuredly for the infirmity of the youthful mind.

Tidings of the doings of the pastor of Santigny could not be long in reaching Geneva; and it could not be doubted that that "Venerable Company," who delight to honour the man, who proclaims from the pulpit, the chair, and the press, "*nous nions que Jesus Christ est l'eternal, le createur du ciel et de la terre,*" who regard the doctrine of the divinity of the Son of God, and the other life-giving truths dependent on that one, as fit only for exclusion from their creed, would not be

* Dr. G. refers to *successive* changes which this Catechism quietly underwent. He mentioned to me, that he had in his possession no fewer than *fourteen* editions of the book, in each of which, with furtive caution, this Catechism had undergone successive, but unacknowledged, changes, until, at last, it was utterly drained of the elements of saving truth.

† Lettres de M. Pasteur Gaussen, a la Venerable Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve, pp. 4, 5.

slow in adopting measures against one who wished to restore to the Catechism the doctrines which they had expunged, or would substitute in the place of their Catechism the word of God itself. These were the only offences of this excellent christian pastor; and, without going into the details of the process, it will suffice to state its results. A lover of peace, it may be to an extreme, Dr. G. consented to use the Catechism, with the express understanding that he should be allowed to teach also the doctrines which he believed; but, as he judged it necessary for the defence of his character, and of the truth of which he stood forward as the advocate, to publish the letters to the Venerable Company from which I have made the above extracts, the Company demanded that these letters should be withdrawn.* Dr. G. felt that he had gone far enough in consenting to re-introduce the Catechism; and, somewhat imploringly, besought the Company not to demand this; "as such a step on my part would inevitably be interpreted as a retraction of my principles and of my doctrines, I hope the Venerable Company will well consider how I may not be exposed to the imputation of such a disavowal."† Encouraged, perhaps, by Dr. G.'s submission in regard to the Catechism, to hope that he would be equally submissive in regard to the letters, and determined to show their power over one who, they thought, was now at their feet, the Company were inexorable; but hap-

* The words of the Company are most laconic—*Arrete—M. Gaussen devra retirer des lettres.*

† *Lettres*, p. 73.

pily for Dr. G., happily for the cause of truth, happily also for the progressive unmasking of those ecclesiastics by their own hands, Dr. G. obtained mercy to be faithful, and would on no terms submit to this last imperious demand of the Company. I give his own words, mild for the occasion, but at the same time firm. "If this step," (the withdrawing of his letters,) "grave in itself, had been recommended to me in a spirit of conciliation, as proceeding from peace, and as a testimony of regard, it would have demanded from me the most serious examination. But it is not in this sense that it is demanded of me. The Company, after having declared that it will admit neither my reasonings nor my theories, *determines (arrete)* I shall withdraw the letter which explains these;—it *demands (demande)* this, I am told;—it even *exacts it (l'exige)*. In the eyes of all men, language such as this inevitably implies a retractation; and very clearly signifies, by this step, that the pastor of Santigny must himself pass sentence of condemnation on the principles established in his letter. . . . In a matter so grave, in a cause so holy, I desire to overlook entirely considerations which affect only my own reputation. . . . I desire to regard only far higher thoughts; I have professed sacred principles, which ought, in my eyes, still to govern the church of Geneva, and *which alone, I am profoundly persuaded, are able to raise her up*. Can I disavow these principles, without betraying the most holy of causes; without failing in my fidelity towards God, towards my country, and towards a body of which I am a member; without speaking, in fine,

in opposition to my own most intimate conviction? Will you, then, express to the Venerable Company my regret that I cannot take the step which it demands of me?"*

The sequel is short. The Company sends again to Dr. G. its *decree*, and requires him, by Friday next, to "answer definitively in regard to his acceptance, pure and simple, of the entire *arreté*." Dr. G. again sends a solemn and affecting answer to the Company, abiding by his resolution. The decision of the Company follows, and is, "1. M. Gaussen is censured. 2. He is suspended for a year from his right to sit in the Company, except in cases when he shall be ordered,"† &c.

Dr. G. and his friends, however, were not daunted by this fulmination of the Venerable Company. Persuaded that the spiritual interests of their fellow-citizens, the very existence of the church of Geneva, and the honour of the great God our Saviour, demanded some measures of a more decisive character than they had yet adopted, with the growing displeasure of the church and civil authorities of Geneva before them, they did not hesitate to take their ground. Scarcely had this censure passed, till *the Evangelical Society of Geneva* was instituted, a society, the nature and importance of which I shall advert to afterwards; but of which it is enough to say here, that it contemplated the preservation in Geneva of evangelical truth in its purity; and, with this view, opened an apartment for

* Lettres, pp. 77, 78, 79.

† Ib. p. 86.

the preaching of the gospel in the city, and took the still more decisive and important step of forming a theological seminary, in which pious youths might be prepared for the ministry, without being exposed to the contagion of the Genevese Academy, and coming out from a nominally christian school, with no better recommendation than this, that they had been indoctrinated in Genevese Arianism.

In the formation of this institution, others were associated with Mr. Gaussen, and one especially, whom to name is to praise, and who, in the eyes of Europe, has imparted a fresh lustre to the very name of Geneva. I refer to Mr. (now Dr.) Merle D'Aubigné.

It is easy to imagine with what indignation the Venerable Company beheld those men and their measures. The Company regarded themselves as the appointed conservators of peace, order, subordination, and confidence among the pastors and churches; but where were confidence, subordination, order, or peace, if such things were sanctioned in Geneva? Without, therefore, inquiring who were to blame in these proceedings, Dr. Gaussen and his friends, who sought to preserve peace by protecting purity, and who claimed the confidence of their brethren, by honestly obeying the ordinances under which the Genevese church was constituted, and which her pastors were bound to obey, or the Company, who had destroyed their claims to confidence, by unfaithfulness in their great trust, who had set at defiance the laws of the Genevese Republic, and whose hostility to the gospel rendered

peace impossible, except by compromising truth; without troubling themselves with such inquiries, they summon the offenders to their bar, dictate to the Consistory the decision it should pass, and obtain from the Council of State the necessary sanction of their decision. It was in vain that the holy eloquence of the accused was called forth on this occasion. It was in vain that by word and writing, they demonstrated the necessity of their measures, vindicated their right to employ them, and exposed the weakness and unreasonableness of the objections of their opponents. The Company possessed power; they were resolved to exercise it; and they passed the following *arreté*, on the 30th of September, 1831. "1. To recall Mr. Gaussen from the functions of Pastor of Santigny. 2. To interdict Messrs. Gaussen, Galland, and Merle, from all the functions of the pulpit, in the churches and chapels of the Canton." * By virtue of some *concordat*, entered into betwixt the Company and the Consistory, respecting the order of their procedure in their respective meetings, this *arreté* of the Company was transmitted to the Consistory, who slavishly adopted the very words of the decision of the Company; with this addition, however, "that if the causes which necessitated this decision should cease, the Consistory reserved to itself to invite the Venerable Company, to restore Messrs. Gaussen, Galland, and Merle, to the functions of the pulpit." But to prevent any alarm to the jealous Company, even this provision is

* *Memoires adressés au Conseil D'Etat, par M. Gaussen, p. 89.*

thus restricted, "this deliberation can have place only at the request of five members of the Consistory." * As the decision, however, neither of Company nor Consistory could be effective, without the sanction of the Council of State, the case was forthwith transmitted, with explanatory matter, by the Consistory, for their final decision, in the case of the only one of the three who had a pastoral charge in the Canton. The obsequious Council adopts the decision of the Company and Consistory; and leaving out of view the case of Messrs. Galland and Merle, which became final, I suppose, by the decision of the two other bodies, decreed, "that M. Minister Gaussen is recalled from his functions as Pastor of the Parish of Saintigny."

It is given by our Saviour as a commendation of one of the primitive churches, "thou canst not bear them which are evil." The authorities in the church of Geneva have established their claim to a character directly the reverse. They cannot bear those that are good; and thus they disposed of the services of the best and most eminent men, of whom their church could boast. We shall see, however, how these things turned out rather to the furtherance of the gospel; and one can only wonder that these excellent men lingered so long in a society so corrupt; that they did not sooner hear the monitory voice, "come out of her my people;" and that, in place of leaving to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of Geneva to

* Mem. p. 91.

exclude them from the pulpits, they did not of themselves withdraw. Of this, however, every pious and intelligent observer of events could not but be persuaded, that the exclusion of such men from the communion of the Genevese pastors, and the formation under their auspices, and the divine benediction, of such an institution as the Evangelical Society, must be regarded as forming an era in the religious history of Geneva, the extensive, happy, and lasting results of which time will unfold.

I shall not pursue farther these afflicting details; but I feel persuaded that every considerate and religious reader must already have anticipated this general conclusion,—that the providence of God has set forth fallen Geneva as a beacon to other churches, to warn them against the dangers amidst which she has been left to make shipwreck of the faith. And I shall finish this chapter by pointing out what, as appears to me, are the particular errors against which the melancholy circumstances of the Genevan church are well fitted to guard the British churches.

1. The first I notice is the danger of allowing unsound doctrines to enter into a church. The truth as it is in Jesus, the word of the truth of the gospel, is a sacred trust, committed by God to his people, than which, one more momentous and holy cannot be confided to man; and the fidelity of the church, is to be proved by the vigilance with which she guards this grand deposit. “That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us,” said Paul to one of the primitive

teachers. "Thou hast kept the word of my patience," was the approbation of our Lord, bestowed on one of the primitive churches. "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," is a divine command to the whole body of the faithful in Christ Jesus. The truth of the gospel is the very food of souls, divinely prepared aliment, that by which men are enlightened and sanctified, consoled and saved, assimilated in character to God himself, and fitted for his service and glory in both worlds; and, if this truth be parted with, the very staff of spiritual life is broken; if it be vitiated by the most specious human admixtures, the food of souls is spoiled, and that which was ordained unto life may become little else than a ministration of death. But if such fatal results are to be prevented, the first inroads of error must be jealously watched, and faithfully repelled; for it too frequently happens, that its patrons artfully conceal their *whole system*, and, at first, rather prepare the way for its admission, by the suggestion of doubts, or of plausible theories, thrown out for inquiry, and accompanied with great professions of candour, meekness, and charity, than by an honest and bold avowal of their real opinions. The irruption of error is often like the gentle loosening of a sluice, from which, at first, only a little is permitted to ooze out, nothing whatever calculated to create alarm; but which, when fully opened, allows a flood to rush, by which, fields, once fertile, are quickly overrun, and are soon converted into stagnant and pestilential marshes. It resembles the first slight indications of vital disease in the

human body, which, if at once subjected to prompt and wise treatment, might be remedied with ease, but which, if neglected then, spreads rapidly through the frame, and terminates in incurable malady, and ultimate dissolution. The Genevan church, and too many of the continental churches as well as she, are, indeed, sad and solemn warnings to us, warnings, reiterating those long ago supplied by the early degeneracy of many churches which were planted and watered by the Apostles of Christ—warning to ministers of the gospel, to “hold fast the faith,” to “take heed to themselves and to the doctrine,” and to “continue” to do so, if they would save themselves, and them that hear them; and, I will add, warnings to the whole christian body, to “prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.” It appears that to scarcely any one subject do the inspired Apostles more abundantly direct the primitive churches than to this; nearly all their epistles containing solemn admonitions against corrupting, or departing from, the faith; which, I am sure, were never more needed by the British, as well as the continental churches, than at this day. For, to take but one example, it is not too much to say, that the vast Hierarchical Establishment of England, is at this moment nearer to the deadly errors, the debasing superstition, and the befooling mummeries of Popery, than, a century ago, Geneva was near to Unitarianism and Neology. It has been stated publicly, and without contradiction, by one of the most devout and cautious among the ministers of London, at a public meeting recently held in that

metropolis, that of the eighteen thousand clergy of various orders connected with the Church of England, not more than three thousand could be found willing to subscribe any declaration whatever against the new phase of Popery, designated Puseyism. Yes, the enemy is sowing tares over all the British soil, the most unfit of all seasons, assuredly, for men to sleep.

2. The invasion of the rights of the private members of the church is another evil against which the Genevese history warns us. I have endeavoured to show that in this important department of christian liberty—the right of church members to the free and unfettered election of their own office-bearers—a right divinely conferred on the christian church, was virtually withheld from the Genevese, from the time of the reformation; the results of which were, as we have seen, a popular apathy, and a facility for official intrigue, from which some of the worst evils with which that church has been afflicted, took their rise. It is cheering to reflect, that among the British dissenters now so widely spread, and annually augmenting in number and influence, this sacred right is so generally recognized; and that in almost all the American churches, the same liberty prevails. Long may it prevail; universally may it spread; and may that large and growing society, which has its ramification every where, and whose influence in Christendom is now so considerable, the Wesleyan body, soon enjoy it in all its plenitude: for the liberty of Christ is most injuriously abridged where this privilege is denied. When will that portion of the English people, who

still linger within her Establishment, break the fetters they have tamely worn so long, and assert their freedom? When will they become weary or ashamed of that abject and slavish vassalage by which they are as passive and mute in the choice of their spiritual superiors, as serfs in the succession of their next proprietor? Patronage, which has long spread spiritual desolation wherever it has had its sway, has, I trust, received its death-blow in Scotland; and let us be urged by the example of Geneva, as well as by higher considerations, to endeavour that it be speedily uprooted from our soil, that the spirit of hostility to this long continued evil may be awakened among our Episcopalian neighbours in England, and that, as far as this portion of christian freedom is concerned, the churches of Christ throughout all our land may be free indeed.

3. I refer next to the interference of the secular power with the affairs of the christian church. We have seen that, from the beginning, the Genevan church was by this means corrupted and enthralled. And surely, if Geneva requires liberation from this secular influence, much more does Britain. Geneva never bestowed on man or woman the title, "Supreme head of the church on earth;" a title which it were hard to determine whether to grant it, or to accept it, or to bow to it, be the greatest indignity to the Redeemer. What shall we say, if, in our own land, all the three are combined? This, indeed, is Cæsar's intrusion into Christ's domain—is to place, or to attempt to place, his sceptre in human hands—is to desecrate

his crown, by an attempt to bind it on a human brow. From this interference of the secular power with sacred things, intolerance, in its various forms, has sprung here, as in other lands. The ecclesiastical and civil history of Britain is, in this respect, darker than even that of Geneva; and the active intolerance of past ages still exists among us in many a statute and canon, and in the spirit and bearing of too many living ecclesiastics.

4. There is no lesson which Britain requires more to learn from Geneva, than the sacred duty of guarding the admission of members into the communion of the church. To a great extent, I fear, it is not possible that admission, without discrimination of character, could ever have been more prevalent there than it has been, and is, here. By the very theory of the constitution of the Church of England, the nation and the church are co-extensive and identical—over the whole land, connection with a church, on the part of the greater number, is a mere affair of birth, education, or usage—millions of our people believe, what thousands of their clergy teach, that the water of baptism, canonically applied, regenerates the soul; to which must be added, that among the mischiefs of division, and of consequent ecclesiastical rivalry and partizanship, beyond the pale of our establishments, parties are too ready to swell their numbers, by inconsiderate and unwise admissions. Who shall estimate the evils resulting from this state of the British churches, to the cause of religion, and to the souls of men? What gain can accrue to any man from an ignorant or false profession

of the religion of Christ? What can any church gain by a crowd of such professors? What it gains in number, it is evident, it must lose in character and strength—a united body in name, its members are as widely separated, and as antagonistical in truth, as Christ and Belial—the standard of character, of living religion, is depressed or confounded—the spirit of the true members of the church is vexed and discouraged, and their efforts cramped and impeded, by the presence and resistance of these false brethren within,—the life of the church languishes, her glory fades—her enemies laugh among themselves at the discordant spectacle she presents—her Divine Lord is dishonoured and offended, because his temple is defiled—and his professed subjects, deceiving or deceived, or both, are miserably unprepared for the day of his coming, and their great account when he appeareth. “Who may abide the day of his coming, and who may stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. . . Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGUN REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN GENEVA.

WE cannot enough admire the long suffering, and the mercy of God, manifested towards his church, even in her periods of greatest declension. The history of the Jewish church abounds with such displays of divine tenderness. Who can reflect on the records of that people in the desert, without being struck with their unbelief, perversity, and ingratitude, on the one hand, and with the patience and loving kindness of Jehovah, on the other? Even when they provoked him to just anger by their inventions, when they so quickly forgot his mighty works, and followed not his counsel, when they remembered not God their Saviour, who had done such great things for them, and refused to believe his word, he would not cast them off. While righteous judgments descended upon many, and the great oath was fulfilled, that the unbelievers should not enter into his rest, in his great mercy he pitied them;

regarding their affliction, and hearing their cry, remembering for them his covenant, and repenting him, according to the multitude of his mercies.

Similar reflections are forced upon us by his dispensations towards the same people after their settlement in the land of promise. A perpetual tendency on their part to corrupt religion, to depart from God, and to involve themselves in those miseries which were denounced and inflicted for disobedience, appear in contrast with faithful warnings, compassionate relentings, and gracious deliverances by their God. How did Jehovah manifest that he hateth putting away! Even when faithfully declaring in his holiness, "My people are bent to backsliding from me; though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him," with all the bowels of a father averse to reject a froward child, he thus addresses that unwise and disobedient people, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee." Hos. xi. 7—9.

If the church of Geneva has too much resembled Israel in her sin, it has pleased God to remember her like Israel in his mercy;—to remember her, the kindness of her youth, and the love of her espousals. I trust a great work of God has begun there, which, in answer

to the prayers of many, shall advance, until Geneva shall again be raised to its once high position among the churches of the saints.

I shall endeavour to relate such facts as were brought to my knowledge, in the order in which they occurred.

And, first, it appears that piety was never suffered to become extinct in Geneva. The succession of good men both among the pastors and the flocks was unbroken. There were in all periods some faithful among the faithless. The excellent Benedict Pictet, to whom I have already referred, lived till 1736. During the period of scepticism and darkness that followed, there were some pastors who taught the truth; and four or five such are mentioned, as living at the time of the proceedings against Dr. Malan. Of the extent to which their labours were blessed, and their sentiments embraced, among the people, I had no means of definite information; but the conviction of the best informed to whom I had access was, that genuine godliness never altogether disappeared among the people. Indeed, it is rare, if it ever happens, that the gospel of salvation is administered long without some saving fruit, or that the whole flock of a faithful pastor remains in unbelief. The Lord gives testimony to the word of his grace; it does not return to him void; and some believe the things that are spoken. Even under an unsound ministry, piety may linger, and be nourished either by other means than those which the pulpit supplies, or by such scanty parcels of truth as even an unsound minister, who must read and quote the Bible, may be obliged to impart. But

the vitality that existed at this time in the ecclesiastical body seems to have become feeble in the extreme; the things that remained were ready to die. I put these questions to a well informed friend. "During the period of the declension, were there no strong measures adopted by the few pious pastors, such as discussion in the Consistory, uniting in the record of solemn protestations, publications, rousing the people to a sense of their danger, &c. Were no spirited measures taken by the pious among the people themselves? Or did all slumber and sleep while the enemy was busy sowing his tares?" And I received the following afflicting reply. "All slept. There were protestations in the Company, but the minority was choked; and by a bad spirit of corporation and brotherhood, by the secrecy of the deliberations, by the declension of individual faith, by the cunning and machinations of the Company, the people remained ignorant of the alterations of the standards, catechism, liturgies," &c. A sad illustration of the manner in which the process of deterioration, and the course of apostacy advanced, when these have unhappily been suffered to commence in a church.

But scarcely had Pictet been removed from the church below, till it pleased God to raise up other witnesses to the truth, without the pale of the Genevese communion. This honour was reserved for the Moravian brethren. There lives in Geneva at present an excellent man, one of the pastors of the church of the Pelisserie, to which I shall presently allude, (a dissenting body,) who was a student in the Academy,

as early as 1810. I have been favoured with a very long interview with him, and with the perusal of a highly interesting memoir and journal, in manuscript, prepared by himself, respecting the labours of the Moravians, and the origin of the church which sprung from them; and it is from these sources that I derive the following information.

Count Zinzendorf visited Geneva about 1740; and, always active in the service of his Master, he was the instrument of the conversion of a Genevese lady in his journey thither. That venerable matron lived in the odour of sancity till 1818, when she died at the age of ninety-four. The Moravians, I understand, have two sorts of flocks; the one, which they denominate *the dispersed*, that is, such as receive their doctrines, and enjoy the fellowship of the society, although they remain in other communions, and do not form themselves into a Moravian church; the other, come out and are separate, and have the usual organization of the churches of that body. The flock in Geneva was of the former description; and from the year 1740 for many years after, "was very considerable," in point of numbers. These numbers, however, greatly declined, until about 1810, when they were reduced to "a few names," indeed not exceeding five or six. But they were true disciples; and, hearing how the gospel was spreading in other lands, and mourning over the spiritual desolation around them, they betook themselves to that never failing refuge of the afflicted, *prayer*—social and secret prayer. They did more; they formed themselves into a society for reading the Scriptures devo-

tionally, in which they received the countenance of one of the remaining pious pastors of the church. These efforts are represented as having been made in much weakness; but the result was, that several persons were soon brought to serious concern for their salvation, and the friend to whom I have referred was this year savingly turned to the Lord. His own experience is related with touching simplicity, and, in its chief features, very much resembles that of other converts. The spirit of God convinced him of sin, and he describes the self-reproach, and unutterable terrors, which an awakened conscience produced. He sought for peace, but at first found it not; his expedients for relief were "penitence, macerations, prayer;" but the peace he sought fled from him. The Lord brought him into affliction by the loss of a beloved parent, which served but to augment his distresses, until he could hardly attempt to approach at all the Holy One, and he tended to despair. In these circumstances, a humble Moravian workman was the instrument of his deliverance. Seeing his dismal condition, he directed him to a free forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb. The grace of the Lord was exceeding abundant to him with faith and love, and he found peace and joy in believing. He soon began to communicate to others the truth which he himself had received; and along with another pious young friend, formed a Sabbath School for the religious instruction of the young. He likewise did what he could to induce others to attend the meetings of the friends.

These meetings, however, did not escape the obser-

vation of their jealous enemies, the Venerable Company. The friend with whom this young convert acted was a minister, though not a pastor ; and the Company let him know, that if he did not desist from these meetings, he should be excluded from the ministry ; and, to render their influence the stronger, the secretary of the Company waited on the father of the young man, to induce him to prevail with his son to withdraw himself from the meetings. For a time he did so ; but not so the other, who continued successfully to prosecute his labours of love. At length, however, he also was assailed by the Company—was brought before them, interrogated, and warned ; from the Company he was handed over to the Consistory, and by the latter body a decree was passed, excluding him from the Academy, unless he should leave the meetings. The details of these proceedings, as given in the MS., are full of instruction. Eager to know the exact sentiments of his opponents, he went to a member of the Company, in whose candour he had confidence, and inquired what was the real reason of the hostility shown him ; did the Company object to his conduct, or to his doctrine ? He was plainly told—to his doctrine. “ What doctrine ? ” he eagerly asked ; and what was the answer, and in what terms was it couched ? “ You believe that God is too old, and that you ought to worship Jesus Christ ! ” “ Do you say this seriously ? ” “ Yes. ” “ But, Sir, how can you believe that such an idea can enter into the head of any sane man ? I believe that none can come to the Father but by the Son ; that he who has not the Son of God has not life, but that the wrath

of God abideth on him." He was answered, "That is it precisely—such are your ideas—that is just what I tell you. But we believe no such things." "What! Do you not believe these things?" "No, I tell you, we believe these things no more." "Nevertheless, they are the words of the Scripture." "I tell you we no longer believe these things." The answer was prompt and decisive. "Since it is so, I am bound to declare, that I am no longer of your communion."

I shall not enter farther into these details, except to notice, that it pleased God to bring to Geneva about this time (1814) an excellent christian lady, the Baroness Krudener, who greatly animated the little christian band; that the number of hearers and converts greatly increased, although they were denounced from the pulpits, and loaded with reproaches by multitudes; and finally, that a church was formed, which subsists to this day, with a membership of from two to three hundred; and is designated from the street in which the place of worship stands—The Church of the Pelisserie. It is constituted on the independent or congregational model; and although it has been subjected to severe internal trials, and has recently secretly suffered by division, I believe the disciples walk in love, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and are edified.

As connected with the revival of religion, I have next to notice the results of the proceedings against Dr. Malan. These proceedings, designed as they were to prevent, very remarkably promoted, the spread of religious truth in Geneva. Dr. Malan is a person of no

common qualities, and even at that early period of his life and labours, was well fitted to awaken and impress his countrymen. In the vigour of youth, manly and noble in his appearance, accomplished beyond many of his equals in literary attainments, highly eloquent, devoted to his sacred vocation, and full of the fervour of first love to Christ and to his cause, we need not wonder that, wherever he preached, crowds, for a time, followed him; and that the publicity of the proceedings directed against him, and the severity with which he was treated, tended to create popular reaction, and to produce a strong feeling in his behalf. It is true, that the active and unrelenting hostility of the Company, and the prevailing ungodliness of the citizens, at last turned from him the tide of favour. But the Lord stood with him and strengthened him, that by him the preaching might be fully known; not a few were impressed and savingly changed; a church was ultimately formed under his pastoral care, constituted on the Presbyterian model; and, in the midst of much discouragement, is maintained to this day.

It is not easy to estimate the extent of spiritual success with which the labours of this venerable man of God have been crowned. He is very careful in the admission of members; and according to his own estimate, there have been several hundreds in communion with his church, since the period of its formation in 1818. Of that number, many, of course, have been removed by death, and not a few have left Geneva, or been adjoined to other churches; but there still remains with him a small but faithful band of upwards

of one hundred. Dr. M.'s chapel has not a little about it to command interest. It is situated without the city, a few minutes' walk from its southern gate, in a small suburb called Pré l'Eveque. The sequestered, modest, grove-like appearance of the spot, strikes and pleases the eye of a stranger. About an acre of ground is enclosed by a high wall, and is laid out with equal taste and economy by the good Doctor, who possesses, I believe, the one quality from nature, and the other from necessity, both being hallowed by the grace of God. On entering, you perceive a compound of orchard, vineyard, flower and kitchen garden, shaded walks and retired arbours. Toward one angle is the chapel, a very humble edifice in exterior appearance, but neat and clean within, and capable of accommodating about 500 persons. At a small distance is the Doctor's dwelling-house, a plain commodious mansion, having Joshua's vow inscribed above its entrance—"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." The audience in the chapel is generally small; but they seem to be, like their pastor, devout. Indeed, devotion, sanctity, that holiness which becomes God's house, seem the pervading characters, the very atmosphere, of this peaceful Genevan retreat. Much communion with God has been enjoyed within that enclosure. Many sighs, and tears, and prayers, have been offered to Him, for the long desolation of Geneva. Many have been added to the Lord here, and enrolled among the saved. May its name ever be "Bethel, the house of God, the gate of heaven."

But it is not in Geneva alone, nor by his pulpit la-

bours exclusively, that the extent of good accomplished by his instrumentality is to be judged of. He has been greatly useful in extensive missionary tours in various parts of Switzerland, in Belgium, and in France; many in Britain have been benefited by his instructions; and his numerous writings have had extensive fruit. It is also well known to all who are acquainted with Dr. Malan, that his conversation is habitually spiritual and edifying, that he is not less disposed to instruct than visitors are to listen, and that his private preaching to individuals, or from house to house, has perhaps been scarcely less extensively blessed than his instructions from the pulpit.

Dr. M.'s powers of conversation are universally acknowledged by his brethren and friends; nor can any one be with him, even for a few moments, without being struck with them. His heart is replenished with truth, and love, and grace, and from the fulness of that heart his eloquent mouth speaks. From the heart he has spoken to many a heart, and his words have been accompanied with the power of God. You frequently find in his habitation a sort of uninvited religious levée, composed of persons from various countries, as well as ranks in society. I remember calling one evening, as I often did, and found a group of English and Americans calling too, and particularly an interesting Hungarian minister, groping his way to the light of truth, and sent to our excellent friend as a fit guide and counsellor. He was afterwards closeted with him for a considerable time for conference and prayer, and I had the pleasure of hearing that the result was favourable.

Of innumerable anecdotes respecting Dr. M., I may relate the following, regarding an occurrence that took place not many years ago. He happened to be in the adjoining territory of Savoy, where Romish surveillance is perpetually on the alert. He was suspected as chargeable with the offence of distributing tracts obnoxious to the Roman Catholics; he was seized, and, under the custody of two *gens d'armes*, sent to prison. The charge was without evidence or foundation, and he was not detained; but, nothing daunted by his situation, and conceiving the opportunity to be important and favourable, the Dr. preached the gospel to the poor fellows who attended him in the carriage which conveyed them to the prison; and there is good reason for believing that one of these soldiers, employed to incarcerate the ambassador of Christ, was himself brought to the Saviour, and introduced into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Powerful, however, as he is in conversation, I cannot help thinking that devotion (if it is proper to use the phrase in such an application of it) is, after all, Dr. M.'s fort. He lives much in communion with God; prayer and praise are his business and pleasure; and when he descends from the holy mount his face indeed shines. To use New Testament phraseology, "he dwells in God, and God in him."

Often, however, I could not but fancy that I perceived an air of sadness overshadowing the devotions both of Dr. M. and of his church. It seemed to me that they were not strangers to the experience of the pious captives of old, when they thought of the stones

and rubbish of Jerusalem, and wept when they remembered Zion. No wonder. They are at the gate of Geneva.

No foreign minister has been better known among British Christians of various denominations, by personal intercourse, than Dr. Malan. I trust he will not be forgotten by them in the evening of his days. He and his little flock are well worthy of their affectionate sympathy, and, if need be, of their generous support. May it please God to shower down on him and on them the influences of his Holy Spirit; may the word of the Lord administered by him have free course and be glorified; and may many be given to his servant, from many lands, as his joy and crown of rejoicing, before the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming!

About the time of Dr. Malan's separation from the church, a native of this country was directed to visit Geneva; and I suppose that no foreigner has been the instrument of doing so much for the revival of the knowledge of evangelical truth and of vital religion there, as the excellent person to whom I allude. I refer to the late Mr. Robert Haldane. He visited Geneva in 1816, unquestionably with the purpose of doing as well as getting good, (for such a purpose in some measure of habitual activity seems inseparable from the character of all who have the mind in them which also was in Christ Jesus,) but whether with any definite intention of attempting any thing among the students of theology there, I do not know, having had no positive information on the subject. But from one who knew him well, who was personally and intimately acquainted with him

in Geneva, who was then a young pastor, and profited greatly by his intercourse with Mr. Haldane, I was informed of the providential circumstances by which he was so happily brought into intercourse with these young men. Mr. Haldane, soon after his arrival in Geneva, became acquainted with one of the best of the pastors at that time in the church; and the sentiments of that minister being very vague, little, therefore, to the taste of Mr. Haldane, some discussion took place betwixt them. The minister not understanding English, and Mr. Haldane at that time not speaking French with much facility, a student was brought, either at the first, or at some subsequent meeting, to assist as an interpreter betwixt his two seniors. The young man was at once struck with the sound sense of the English stranger, and particularly with what justly appeared to him, his remarkable acquaintance with the word of God, and the readiness and judgment of his apt quotations from it. He communicated his impressions to two of his fellow-students, and requested them to accompany him in a visit to Mr. Haldane, which they readily agreed to; and they were not less struck than their companion with the intelligence of Mr. Haldane. These three talked of the interview to the rest, brought first one, and then another along with them, until the whole of the students in the Theological Institution, I believe almost daily, either together, or separately, or both, waited on Mr. Haldane in the hotel in which he lodged, and eagerly received his instructions. His only text-book was the Bible; the book he chiefly selected was the epistle to the Ro-

mans; the divinity of the Son of God, his obedience unto the death as the sole ground of the remission and acceptance of the sinner, the universal fall and depravity of the race, the impossibility of life by the works of the law, the free access which the sinner has by the grace of God to the Saviour, the duty of immediately trusting in him for life and salvation, and the fruits of a living faith in repentance, love, and new obedience, were the great subjects of his addresses and conversations. He invited them to a free communication of their sentiments to him, of their difficulties, their objections, their feelings; and his constant and unvarying practice was, to lead them directly to the Scripture, for light and establishment. In employing the Scripture to explain itself, in showing that his interpretations and replies were safe, because scriptural, in comparing spiritual things with spiritual, Mr. Haldane was peculiarly expert and successful.

During the six months of his residence in Geneva, these exercises were continued; and, with such divine teaching were they graciously accompanied, that of the eighteen students who attended them, sixteen were savingly converted, and gave evidence, by their future life and labours, of the genuineness of the change. It cannot be wrong in me to mention, because it is not concealed by the illustrious person himself, and has, indeed, been noticed, I believe, by the press, that one of these converted youths was Merle D'Aubigné.

Who can imagine the results of the visit of this one man to Geneva: who can estimate the amount of

good, direct and indirect, of which, through the grace of God, it has been productive ! Had Robert Haldane lived but to accomplish this one visit, he had not truly lived in vain. It is one of the many animating examples, with which the history of religion abounds, of the blessedness of doing good, of the amount of good of which one individual may become the instrument, and of this shortest, safest, and most effectual method of attempting the work of spiritual beneficence, the employment of God's own word, with judgment, assiduity, humility, and prayer.

Britain owes much to Geneva, and it is pleasing to observe how, in the case of Mr. Haldane, the inestimable treasure we derived thence, was thus brought back to Geneva. O, it were well, if the British, who in such multitudes visit this city, would aspire after something purer and more exalted, than to admire the beauty and magnificence of the region in which Geneva is situated ; and that, deploring the fallen state of this once favoured city, they bethought themselves of leaving there at least some spiritual memorials of their presence, were it only by suggesting some counsels to some of her thoughtless inhabitants, leaving behind them some Bible, book, or tract, or inquiring after and aiding some of those institutions which have recently been formed for re-kindling there the light of the gospel, or at least pouring out their souls in prayer to the God of salvation, that he would arise and have mercy on poor Geneva, that he would appear in his glory, and build her up.

In regard to Mr. Haldane's visit, I shall add only

these two facts. The state of religious ignorance among the students of the Academy was very extraordinary about, or immediately previous to, that period. Whatever knowledge they possessed, or whatever errors they had received, they seem to have known scarcely any thing about the Bible itself. One who had become a minister, and who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth shortly before Mr. Haldane came, told me, that as for himself, when he was in the Academy, had any one asked him how many epistles are there in the New Testament, from Paul to the Romans, one, two, or three? he could not have answered the question. When I mentioned this to another who was in the Academy about the same time, he said, "To be sure, we knew nothing about these things:" yet ignorance so gross, could not surely have been universal.

The other part to which I refer, is the following:—Happening one day to dine with some pious strangers, in the house of an esteemed clerical friend in Geneva, I sat next to a lady from another Swiss Canton. Our conversation was chiefly occupied about the state of religion there; and she spoke of a great increase in the number of faithful ministers, and a considerable religious improvement amongst the people. I inquired to what instrumentality, under God, this favourable change was to be ascribed? She mentioned several means which had been blessed; but added, that the Lord seemed chiefly to have employed the spiritual and zealous ministry of one individual; and that person

was one of the students converted by the labours of Mr. Haldane.

After these paragraphs were written in Geneva, the following account of this remarkable visit, from Mr. Haldane's own pen, was shown me. It is contained in the Scottish Christian Herald for November, 1839. The two accounts, it will be seen, substantially coincide, as far as they relate the same particulars; and the additional facts supplied by Mr. Haldane, cannot fail to prove interesting to my readers.

“For many years I had cherished the idea of going to France, with the view of doing something to promote the knowledge of the gospel in a country in which I had been three times before as a traveller. Accordingly, when the return of peace rendered my design practicable, I went to the continent. Being, however, unacquainted with a single individual there, and therefore unable to arrange any particular plan of action, I feared that my object might prove abortive; and, in consequence, when asked, before I left Scotland, how long I expected to be absent? I replied, ‘Possibly only six weeks.’ The Lord, however, was pleased to open a wide and effectual door, leading me in a way that I knew not, and my residence abroad continued about three years.

“On arriving at Paris, involved, as it appeared, in Egyptian darkness, I soon perceived that I had no means of furthering the object of my journey in that great metropolis. Unexpectedly, however, I met with

Mr Hillhouse, a gentleman from America, of whom I had not before heard. He had landed at Bourdeaux, and travelling through the south of France, had gone to Geneva, and thence to Paris. Having passed through Montauban, where the French Theological Protestant Faculty was founded by Napoleon, he had there, and in other places, inquired respecting the Protestant ministers; and he communicated to me all his information on the subject. He told me, that at Geneva there were only two individuals to whom I could have access; the one, a pastor in advanced years; the other, not a pastor, but what is termed a minister; and that nearly the whole of the other pastors were Arians or Socinians.

“Finding no opening at Paris, I immediately set out for Geneva, hoping that something might be done through the two individuals referred to by Mr Hillhouse. On my arrival I called on the pastor alluded to, (the late M. Moulinié,) and conversed with him on the gospel. He was very kind, but appearing to acquiesce in all that I advanced, discussion on any point was out of the question, and no progress was made. Being, therefore, unable to discover means of usefulness at Geneva, and finding, on inquiry, that the young man also spoken of by Mr. Hillhouse, had some time before removed to Berne, I repaired to that city, where I found he had been ordained a pastor. He was not an Arian or Socinian, but although very ignorant respecting the gospel, he was willing to inquire and hear concerning the great truths which it reveals. I remained in Berne about eight days, during which he

came to me every morning at ten o'clock, and continued till ten at night—in fact, as late as it was possible for him, the gates of the city, beyond which he lodged, being shut at that hour. During the whole day I endeavoured to set before him, as far as I was enabled, every thing relating to the gospel; and have good reason to believe that the word spoken was accompanied with the blessing of the Lord. I was afterwards informed, that subsequently to my departure he conversed with his colleague, the other pastor of the church, on the subject of our discussions, and that, in considering what had been advanced, they arrived at the conclusion that it must be the true doctrine of salvation.

“ I hesitated whether I should return to Geneva, but at last resolved to do so, having heard of two Prussian clergymen, who had recently been in England, and were passing through that town, with whom it was supposed I might have an opportunity of conversing on the gospel, and also of a pastor at a little distance in the country, who, my new acquaintance at Berne informed me, would listen to my statements, but would ‘ draw himself up and not answer a word.’ To Geneva I accordingly returned. With the Prussian clergymen I found no satisfaction in conversing; and although I subsequently did not experience the reserve I anticipated in the pastor just referred to, yet I had not the gratification of meeting him till after the lapse of some time.

“ I, however, again visited M. Moulinié, with whom I had before conversed, who, as formerly, was very

kind, but with whom I could make no progress. From all I could learn from him, Geneva was involved in the most deplorable darkness. It was, as Mr. Burgess observes, 'an unbroken field of labour,' with a 'fallen church.' Calvin, once its chiefest boast and ornament, with his doctrines and works, had been set aside and forgotten, while the pastors and professors were, in general, Arians or Socinians. Some exceptions among them there were, including M. Moulinié, who held the divinity of our Lord Jesus, and, I believe, loved and served him according to their light; but that light was so obscure—they were, on the whole, so ignorant, so incapable of rightly dividing the word of truth—that their preaching was without fruit. They preached neither law nor gospel fully, and their doctrine did not seem to affect the consciences of their hearers. A small prayer-meeting had for some time been held, in consequence, I believe, of a visit of Madame Krudener to Geneva; and by one belonging to it I was told, that, sensible of their want of knowledge, they had prayed that an instructor should be sent to them, and that their prayer, they now believed, was answered.

“Being unable to meet with any other person with whom I might converse on the gospel, I resolved to quit Geneva without delay, and proceed to Montauban. The Lord, however, is often pleased to overrule our purposes by occurrences which, in themselves, appear trifling, and thus to bring about results that could not have been anticipated. M. Moulinié had politely offered to conduct Mrs Haldane to see the model of the mountains, a little way out of town, and with this

object he promised to call on us the following day. In the morning, however, we received a note from him, saying, that having suffered from a severe headache during the night, he was himself unable to come, but had sent a young man, a student of divinity, who would be our conductor. On this providential circumstance depended my continuance at Geneva, which I had been on the point of leaving. With this student I immediately entered into conversation respecting the gospel, of which I found him profoundly ignorant, although in a state of mind that showed he was willing to receive information. He returned with me to the inn, and remained till late at night. Next morning he came with another student, equally in darkness with himself. I questioned them respecting their personal hope of salvation, and the foundation of that hope. Had they been trained in the schools of Socrates or Plato, and enjoyed no other means of instruction, they could scarcely have been more ignorant of the doctrines of the gospel. They had, in fact, learned much more of the opinions of the heathen philosophers, than of the doctrines of the Saviour and his apostles. To the Bible and its contents their studies had never been directed. After some conversation, they became convinced of their ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the way of salvation, and exceedingly desirous of information. I therefore postponed my intended departure from Geneva.

“The two students with whom I first conversed, brought six others in the same state of mind with themselves, with whom I had many and long conver-

sations. Their visits became so frequent, and at such different hours, that I proposed they should all come together, and it was arranged that they should do so three times a-week, from six to eight o'clock in the evening. This gave me time to converse with others, who, from the report of the students, began to visit me, as well as leisure to prepare what might be profitable for their instruction. I took the Epistle to the Romans as my subject; and this portion of Scripture I continued to expound to them during the winter, and to dilate on the great doctrines which it unfolds.

“After having proceeded in this manner about a fortnight with these eight students, I was earnestly solicited, in the name of the other students, to begin anew, in which case I was assured that the rest of them would attend. I accordingly complied with this request, and during the whole of the winter of 1816-17, and until the termination of their studies in the following summer, almost all the students in theology regularly attended. And God was graciously pleased to accompany his own word with power. In addition to the general knowledge which all of them acquired, a goodly number soon appeared to be turned to the Lord. Some of them have now finished their course with joy, and, like MM. Rieu, Gonthier, and Henri Pyt, have left behind them the blessed assurance that they are now in the presence of God and the Lamb; while others have, in like manner, evidenced the reality of the work of grace by the sted-

fastness of their faith, and the abundance of their ministrations.

“ Besides those who attended regularly, some who did not wish to appear with the students, came at different hours ; and in conversing with them at those times, or after finishing the public course at eight o'clock, I was often engaged till near midnight. Others of the inhabitants of Geneva, unconnected with the schools of learning, and of both sexes, occasionally visited me in the afternoon to receive instructions respecting the gospel.

“ The impression produced at Geneva was, by the blessing of God, so great, that discussions became frequent on the great truths connected with salvation. The pastors and professors of the Faculty heard of the doctrines I was inculcating, and the manner in which I spoke of their false doctrine. They began to preach openly against what I taught, and I as plainly controverted what they taught, collecting their arguments, setting them before the students and others to whom I had access, comparing them with Scripture, and labouring to refute their destructive heresies. They insisted that men were born pure, and spoke of the Saviour as the first of created beings, and I opposed and refuted such errors and blasphemies. They taught that the gospel was useful, but not indispensable to salvation, and adduced the case of Cornelius as an example of a man accepted of God without the knowledge of the gospel. I proved that this was an egregious misrepresentation of the fact, and that the history

of Cornelius formed no exception to the uniform doctrine of Scripture—that there is no other way of salvation but by faith in the Saviour. It was not, then, by avoiding controverted subjects, and simply dwelling on truths common to the professing Christians, as some good men have recommended as the proper course to be pursued on the continent, that I laboured to raise up the fallen standard of the gospel at Geneva. It was, on the contrary, by not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, so far as I was enabled to do so; it was by dwelling on every doctrine of the Bible, whether it was controverted or not, or however repulsive to the carnal mind, and by confronting and bringing to the test of Scripture every argument levelled at my instructions by both pastors and professors.

“In this manner matters proceeded at Geneva till the middle of the summer of 1817, the period which terminated the studies of the theological students. The pastors attempted to instigate the government to banish me from their Canton; and when this proved unsuccessful, it was proposed in the ‘Venerable Company’ that I should be cited to appear before them, to answer for the doctrines I was inculcating on the students. On this it was observed by one of them, ‘*Vous ne gagnerez pas grand chose par cela!*’ (You will not gain much by that!) and the matter dropped. At the same time they did all in their power to prevent the attendance of the students. I have since that period conversed in this country with M. Gaussen, and in answer to my inquiry ‘How it was that the pastors

failed in this attempt,' he replied, 'That this was the first blow that had seriously affected them,' and although they were anxious to adopt every means in their power to prevent the students from coming to me, yet they found it impossible, because, if strong measures had been resorted to as the penalty of disobeying the prohibition, the students had resolved to leave their professors. The pastors, however, did not cease to labour to counteract the effects of the change that had taken place in the minds of so many of the students, and particularly by framing the 'Regimens' of May 3d, 1817, consisting of certain articles which every student was ordered to sign before he should be 'consecrated,' and which were intended to exclude from the pulpits of Geneva the doctrines which they so violently opposed, and particularly the doctrines of the Godhead of the Saviour—of original sin—of grace and effectual calling—and of predestination. In spite of all their endeavours, the light was diffused to a very remarkable degree in Geneva, which, through the ministration of these Socinian, Arian, and Arminian teachers, had fallen from the glory which once belonged to it, and instead of being the centre of illumination to Protestant Europe, had become a synagogue of Satan and a citadel of ignorance and darkness."

CHAPTER V.

THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN GENEVA, CONTINUED.

I HAVE now to introduce what appears to me the chief movement in Geneva, both for preserving and extending the knowledge of the truth in the town and Canton, and, I believe, for accomplishing the same great objects in the neighbouring regions. I refer to *the Evangelical Society of Geneva*, with the various institutions which it includes, and its zealous and augmenting agency.

No sooner were Dr. Gaussen and his friends excluded from the pulpits of the national church, than, with much deliberation, and many prayers, they set themselves to inquire what it became them to attempt for their fallen church, and for their benighted city and native land. Convinced that association was necessary to efficiency in the work of their common Lord, and encouraged by the example of the people of God in other lands, they formed the Evangelical Society, in the close of the year 1831.

The objects of this important institution were the following—to preserve the knowledge of the gospel by the ordinance of preaching—to establish a Theological Seminary, for the training of pious youths for the functions of the holy ministry—to circulate the pure word of God, and religious tracts in accordance with its spirit and doctrines—and to promote the cause of God, by what they denominate *exterior evangelization*, that is the promotion of evangelical knowledge in countries foreign to their own, particularly in France and Belgium. To these another object has been recently appended, which, indeed, is little more than the following out of the one first named, *interior evangelization*, that is a more effective and extensive propagation of the truth in their own Canton. In adding a few explanations of these objects severally, I shall avail myself of no oral communications made to me on the spot, but of public documents with which I was very obligingly supplied.

For the object of public preaching, they immediately opened a considerable apartment, but soon afterwards erected a plain and commodious chapel, denominated the *Oratoire*, capable of accommodating seven or eight hundred persons, and situated within the walls. In this chapel there is regular morning service every Lord's day, at the common hour, nine, afternoon service at five, and a meeting at eleven for the scriptural instruction of the young. At all these meetings the attendance is large; the exercises are similar to our own; and the appearance of the audiences in general is intelligent, thoughtful, and devout.

Mr. Pilet is the regular preacher, although others are occasionally employed; and I have seldom heard more clear, scriptural, faithful, and searching preaching from any pulpit, the eloquence and the known character of the distinguished preacher, who is in the prime of life and strength, contributing, under the blessing of God, to give weight to his words. Mr. Pilet is, indeed, a burning and shining light, and many seem willing to rejoice in his light. He is universally loved and respected by those who know him, and especially by those who are blessed with his ministry.

The meeting for the young at eleven is conducted by Dr. Gaussen, who seems remarkably qualified for this department of labour. Studious, learned and accomplished as he is, from his kind condescension, his gentle vivacity, and the simplicity and fervour which mark his explanations, Dr. G. evidently delights and fascinates his young pupils; and it is very pleasing to see before him a large company of Genevese boys and girls, with their bright eyes fixed on their beloved instructor, and to listen to the apt and striking answers which they return to the questions with which his addresses are judiciously interspersed. One cannot but augur much for future Geneva from the attentions of such a labourer devoted to the cultivation of such a soil. Indeed, many adults, both Genevese and foreigners, attend this truly interesting and instructive service. I have seen an English lady of rank descend from her carriage, having her children along with her, take her seat among the pupils, hang on the lips of Dr. G., and stimulate the attention of her children to what they

heard ; and I have known Christians far advanced in years and in piety, speak with delight not only of the pleasure, but of the benefit they derived from these juvenile exercises.

There are few human things, however, of which one can speak with unqualified approbation, and there is a serious defect in the congregation of the *Oratoire*, which, if not speedily supplied may terminate in consequences the most disastrous. It has no ecclesiastical organization. It is neither Episcopalian, Presbyterian, nor Congregational. It is, in fact, not a church. Yet, strange to say, not only are those ordinances administered to which I have already alluded, but Baptism and the Lord's Supper also, and, as far as I know, to all indiscriminately who choose to apply. They have no discipline whatever, either as to the admission, the supervision, or the exclusion of members ; they have no members, no flock, no pastor. It is not for me to determine whether all this arises chiefly from a reluctance formally to separate from the established church, and a desire and hope of returning to its fellowship, should an improvement in its doctrine and administration be brought about, or whether it arises from a diversity of sentiment among the more influential brethren of the *Oratoire* on the important heads of church order and discipline, or from both these causes. Suffice it to say, that some of the leading and most influential hearers and communicants do not hesitate to express how bitterly they regret their anomalous and unorganized condition, and how earnestly they long for better things ;—that the infelicity of their position, and the evils which

it involves and must produce, have been honestly and solemnly brought before the brethren at the head of the Institution—and that there is so far a disposition among them to re-examine circumstances, and to consider what duty to Christ, fidelity to men, and the efficiency and permanence of the agency they have formed, may demand, that they excuse themselves from proceeding to immediate and more decisive action, chiefly by remarking that *they are in a transition state*, and that their existing condition will probably soon undergo revision and change. The sooner the better assuredly, both for the honour of religion, their own success, and the best interests of the existing and of succeeding generations.

But the boldest, the wisest, the most important measure of the Evangelical Society of Geneva, was the institution of a separate school for Theological tuition. One may well imagine with what frowns, with what hostility, such an institution would be regarded by the men of the Academy, by all in the Genevese church whom these men could influence, and by the civil authorities of the city, the recognized guardians of the Academy, and of the church. No language that I can employ is too strong to do honour to the intrepid honesty with which Dr. Gaussen, Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, and their excellent associates, proceeded, in avowing the motives by which they were influenced in the formation of this institution, the reasons which in their judgment demanded its formation, and the humble and confiding piety with which their measures were taken. I have in my possession two documents, worthy

of being written in letters of gold, the one a communication to the Syndics and Council of State, the other an address "to the churches, the universities, and all the faithful in Protestant Christendom." These honest and eloquent documents were published immediately on the formation of their Theological Seminary.

From these documents I select the following short extracts, illustrative of the doctrines which they solemnly pledged themselves to teach and to defend, the palpable necessity which they conceived existed for the formation of their school, and the spirit of devotion and faith by which they were animated in their important undertaking. In their intrepid "communication to the Syndics and Council of State," they declare "writings which have recently emanated from the dogmatical chair of Geneva," (that is the chair of Systematic Theology) "combat the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the fall and natural corruption of man; other publications subvert other truths of the christian religion. Thus the standard of Arianism flourishes above that very chair to which the pastors of our church have confided the teaching of the christian doctrines, without any disclaimer being heard on their part. The Unitarian doctrine, which is fundamentally opposed to that of the reformed church, and to that of all other national churches in the Protestant world, and even to that of the two great sections of Christendom, the Greek and the Latin communion, sits now in the chair of the Theological Institution, which, after Calvin and Theodore Beza, was distinguished by Chandieu, Diodati, Theodore Tronchin, Benedict, and

Francis Turretine, Benedict Pictet, and Antoine Maurice; and this doctrine is taught to the young men who come to prepare themselves for the holy ministry of the word of life, in the churches of Geneva and of France."— And again, "But as for us, humanly speaking, we can hope for nothing from the future. . . . The actual government of the ecclesiastical elections, and the spirit which directs them, take away all hope of admission from those who do not profess Unitarian doctrines: so that the greater part of the ministers attached to the reformed faith see themselves obliged to seek for places in foreign churches, and to exile themselves from their country. Since the restrictive regulation respecting the preaching of certain fundamental doctrines, that is to say, since the month of May, 1817, there have been twenty-two elections of Pastors, or Professors of Theology, without there being established in our parishes, and our Theological chairs, even one of the ministers who have professed, in regard to the divinity of our Lord, the doctrines of the Reformation. We believe this fact is unique in the annals of all the churches of Christendom." *

In these addresses to the churches and universities, and to all the faithful, they express themselves in these words: "From the time that we have understood the obligation" (to form their institution) "we have made haste to place ourselves on its side, trusting in God alone; and we have taken this resolution without having as yet either external resources, which will be in-

* *Memoires Addressés au Conseil d'Etat, par M. Gausson.* pp. 113, 114, 115.

dispensable to us, or professors who will associate themselves with us, or even the knowledge of any student who will be disposed to follow our course. For all these things we have placed our confidence in God; and already, by his grace, for more than one object, this confidence is changed into vision; and his goodness has made us feel, so to speak, the most manifest evidences of his benediction; for he is the Prince of all things, riches come from him, strength and power are in his hands. He holds even the hearts of men, and inclines them at his pleasure, like the rivers of waters. Whosoever trusteth in him shall not be confounded. We dare then still to hope that he will bring to us young Christians, disposed to consecrate their life to Him who hath loved them, and hath given himself a ransom for their souls. They will doubtless anticipate with interest the success which he prepares for them, although they must, during the term of their studies, expect from the Lord, not from us, the subsequent employment of their talents, and their zeal; and thus our Institution will itself become the proof and the measure of the faith which animates them. Will they be solicitous about their ministry, if they commit all the future to the Great Shepherd of souls? He hath the key of David; he openeth and no man shutteth, he shutteth and no man openeth. We call them in faith; in faith they will come." *

These humble yet lofty expectations were not disappointed. Indeed, it pleased Him in whom they

* Memoires, pp. 107. 108.

placed their confidence, to do for them exceeding abundantly above all that they asked, or thought. Professors of theology were wanted, men of piety and of power, men who should not only be competent for the discharge of the functions to which they were summoned, but whose names should be a guarantee for their competence and fidelity, and who, by their known talents and acquirements, consecrated to the service of Christ, should surround with a sacred lustre the infant Institution. Such men the great Head of the church had already provided, and brought them, prepared for the work, by a way which they knew not. Dr. Gaussen had been ejected from his parish because he preferred the sacred Scriptures to a Unitarian Catechism, as a text book for young disciples. Dr. Gaussen was just the man for teaching a sound and scriptural theology; and, disengaged from other service, he accepted the office of Professor of Systematic Divinity. Dr. Merle D'Aubigné had officiated for some years as a Protestant pastor in Brussels, and was chaplain to the King of Holland in that city. The revolution in that country, which terminated in the separation of Belgium from Holland, occurred the year before. Dr. M. D'A. was placed in the midst of the sanguinary contest which raged in Brussels for a few days; and, in a tract recently published, he describes with his accustomed effect the spectacle he witnessed, and in the midst of which he was wonderfully preserved. When the King of Holland lost Belgium, the services of Dr. M. D'A. in Brussels were no longer wanted: he returned to his native Geneva, not knowing the

things which should befall him there; his previous studies, (since that period so productive of instruction and delight to multitudes,) had been greatly versant with ecclesiastical research; and thus, both as to place, character, and acquirement, he was prepared by God for the office he consented to accept in the new Genevese Institution, and which, with so much honour to himself, and advantage to his pupils, he continues, and, I trust, shall long continue to hold—Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Homiletics. Great attention has been paid in Geneva to what is denominated Hermeneutics and Exegesis, or the principles of biblical interpretation, and the critical and practical exposition of the sacred books, guided by these principles. For the superintendence of these important departments of sacred study, two other highly competent persons were soon happily found; the one Mr. Pilet, the preacher in the *Oratoire*, who, I believe, previously belonged to the Canton Vaud, and who explains the New Testament to the students; while Mr. Bost, first, and now Mr. La Harpe, who received a part of his academical education in this country, explains the Old Testament, and also gives instructions in the Hebrew Language, for both of which, Mr. La H. is understood to be eminently qualified. Thus, as far as teachers were concerned, the pious projectors of the new Theological School, to use their own expressions, had their faith soon turned into vision. How faithful is God in the fulfilment of his promises to his confiding people who patiently wait for him! How does he remember for them his holy covenant,

“I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.”

In regard to students, also, events soon showed that their confidence was not vain. I have already said that the number of theological students in the old Academy of Geneva is small. Since the departure of its glory, few strangers have resorted to it for theological instruction; and the demand for students with a view to supply the pulpits of the Canton is necessarily small. Few, therefore, could be expected in the new Institution, at least in the first years of its progress, as they were to be trained not even for the pastorate at home, but for service they knew not where. Including a preparatory seminary, the number of students at present is forty, those in the theological department being sixteen. The latter are all understood to be young men of soundness in the faith, and of decided piety; and, it is hoped, will, through the blessing of God, imbibe some portion of the spirit of their instructors. The theological course occupies three years, the session each year being nine months. Those who require gratuitous support receive it from the funds of the Institution, on principles of strict and prudent economy. The students who, after finishing their curriculum, have left the Institution, have found employment in France and elsewhere, having received ordination to the ministry in churches with which their wishes or associations connected them.

On the department of *Interior Evangelization*, beyond the preaching in the *Oratoire*, and occasional labours of the Professors in small private meetings, they have only begun to enter; but I trust that, having begun, they will henceforth work with their known energy and wisdom, until, as far as external means are concerned, the whole city and Canton be re-evangelized.

In the department of *Foreign Evangelization*, it is really wonderful how much the Society has been enabled to accomplish, within so short a space. Of pious *Colporteurs* employed for bible and tract distribution, as well as conversational instruction and prayer, and of itinerating ministers, and pastors of newly formed churches, they have already an agency amounting to more than *eighty* individuals. These agents labour chiefly in France, amidst great opposition, yet with very encouraging success. Much good has been effected among French Protestants by their means—a body of people every way worthy of their attention, amounting in number to upwards of one million two hundred thousand, according to the most moderate computation, confessedly the most intelligent class of the French people, in many quarters exhibiting a hopeful return to the faith of their pious forefathers, but as a body, lamentably degenerate. Among the Roman Catholics also, their influence has been considerable, and not a few of the members of the infant churches formed by their instrumentality are converts from the Romish faith. It were well if the Christians of Britain were as much alive as their brethren in Geneva, to the claims of France, as a field of missionary labour. Possessing

a population so large, and so rapidly advancing in general education—confessedly exercising so great an influence in every European nation—situated so near, and, at the same time, so accessible to us, it is not less a matter of regret than of surprise, that France, at our doors, with her population of thirty millions, attracts less regard on the part of British Christians than Otaheite, at our antipodes, with her population of thirty thousand. A pious handful of brethren in Geneva, striving to keep alive evangelical truth amidst a flood of domestic heresy, and, as I shall have to show, to save the ark of true protestantism from the grasp of rapacious and advancing catholicism, have more than *eighty* agents, supported by Genevese bounty, scattering the seeds of saving truth on the soil of France, labouring in season and out of season, to rouse their long dormant Protestant brethren, and to awaken some of the thoughtless myriads of that giddy people of another communion, to the things that belong to their peace. With all our resources, what are we doing? I believe less than Geneva. Would to God that Geneva might provoke Britain to jealousy, on behalf of France!

It will naturally be inquired, by what means institutions so considerable, and an agency so numerous and so widely spread, are supported from a territory so small, where wealth is by no means common, and in which the decided friends of evangelical religion are still unhappily so few? The answer is short and cheering—solely by the free-will offerings of the faithful. Among these, indeed, there are found some individuals favoured

with worldly substance, who combine with this advantage a spirit of liberality and of devotement to the cause of Christ, above all praise; while the great body of humble contributors, giving as the Lord hath prospered them, seem not only to persevere, but to increase in their benefactions. The contributions to the various objects of the Evangelical Society amounted, for the year ending in June last, to upwards of 99,000 francs, or about £4000; a sum, I should suppose, as much for Geneva, as at least ten times its amount would be for Glasgow.

As far as I can judge, the means employed to produce this amount of liberality are not so much importunate solicitation, as the lucid and energetic representation of the objects and results of the operations of the Society, to the minds and hearts of the people of God. The annual meeting of the Evangelical Society, is a prolonged religious festival. The *Report* of the Society is an elaborate and well arranged document, prepared, under separate heads, by the most able men whose services they can engage, who employ their talents and their sacred eloquence in the accomplishment of their tasks, and themselves read what they have written. Thus, the first part of the Report for 1843, on Evangelization, interior and exterior, was prepared and read by Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, many passages of which may be compared with the most effective that have been produced by his touching and eloquent pen. The biblical and *colporteur* department was written and read by Colonel Tronchin, a man whom Divine Providence has raised to the first eminence among the moral

magnates of Switzerland, who owns a long and distinguished ancestry, who is blessed with great wealth, and high connections, whose hospitable mansion is opened to the wise and good from every land, and whose princely but unostentatious munificence renders him a nursing father of every good institution in his native country. The Report on the Theological Institution was the production of Mr. La Harpe, by whom it was read, whose experience, learning, and piety, give weight to all his productions. In addition to all, able and devout strangers from other Cantons, the representatives of their respective Societies, were employed in successively addressing the hearers, and in ministering materials for their sympathy, their gratitude, their liberality, and their prayers.

When God accomplishes great ends, he employs suitable means to gain them; and in as far as the means resorted to in Geneva have been tried in other lands, similar results have seldom failed.

In addition to these varied efforts of the Evangelical Society, there remain to be noticed other means of religious improvement, within the city and Canton of Geneva.

There are within the communion of the national church three or four pastors, and several ministers, who are understood to preach the doctrines of grace, some of them with much clearness and power, and an increasing number of the private members of the church who cordially approve of their sentiments. It pleases God often to overrule for good even the errors of men; and unquestionably it is cause of thanks-

giving that there should be any symptoms of revival within the Genevese church; but, if I mistake not, the call to good men in such bad company is as distinct and as imperative, as to pious persons who linger within the pale of Rome, "Come out of her my people!" Their presence in the church reconciles many to its character; and if their ministrations are useful, even in circumstances so adverse, what might they be, were they, with uplifted testimony solemnly to withdraw, with heart and hand to join their seceding brethren, and to go forth to Christ without the hostile camp, bearing his reproach!

By the zeal of these good men, and that of the brethren without the church, week evening meetings for devotional exercises, and for plain and faithful addresses, are held in various parts of the city. These meetings vary in number, from a few obscure individuals brought together in some private apartment, to some hundreds assembling in places of worship. The addresses on these occasions are simple and pungent; the audiences are often profoundly attentive and deeply impressed; and I have been assured that some saving fruit has already been reaped from the good seed thus sown. Indeed, the conversion of some members of the Roman Catholic communion has, I have been informed, certainly resulted from these meetings.

There are besides, private meetings, some of them on a considerable scale, held occasionally in the dwellings of devout Genevese. I was taken by Dr. M. D'Aubigné to one of these, where I found about thirty assembled. There were among them two of the evan-

gelical pastors of the Established Church, and the exercises were well fitted to promote Christian edification; consisting of the reading and brief exposition of the word of God, accompanied with devotional exercises, and free conversation on religious subjects. I attended another in the house of Colonel Tronchin, a handsome *chateau*, about a league from Geneva, on the skirts of its lake, and in the midst of the beauty and grandeur of that fascinating region. About fifty were present, composed of Prussians, Americans, English, and the *elite* I believe, of Genevese talent and piety, both lay and clerical. After free general conversation, a hymn was sung, and addresses delivered, adapted, I thought, to interest and benefit those who heard them. From the deep interest taken by our Genevese friends in Scottish Ecclesiastical affairs, I was requested to communicate, at both these meetings, the information which I was supposed to possess on these matters—a request which I did not feel that it became me to decline.*

* The residence of Colonel Tronchin is an object of great attraction to strangers who visit Geneva. Although not far from the lake, it is situated, amidst rich grounds, near the summit of its sloping bank, probably a few hundred feet above the level of the water. The proprietor has erected a tower on the highest point of his grounds, from the top of which you have a prospect, which, I think, can hardly be surpassed, even by the finest pictures of the imagination. The whole panorama of the Genevan scenery is around you; but the view of the great range of the central Alps, including Mont Blanc, in all its silvery and awful grandeur, is far more distinct and effective than from any point nearer the city. Seen, as I have seen it, in a calm and bright summer evening, with the last rays of the setting sun, reflected from many summits, and

In making a call one day, I met with two pious ladies, with whom I had the pleasure of being acquainted, the one an American, who had resided with her family in the neighbourhood of Geneva for more than a year, but has since that time returned to her native land—the other a Scotch lady, the wife of an English gentleman, who, with their family, have resided near the city for several years. They were just proceeding to attempt the formation of a *Mother's Meeting*, on the plan of such Societies in America and Britain; and although their fears were considerable, they were not without hope and faith that they would succeed ultimately. Sowing in tears, I trust they shall reap in joy. But thus it is that good is diffusive, that

in many hues, it really surpasses description, and at once exalts and overpowers the mind.—Combining piety with taste, the proprietor has got inscribed on the stained glass windows of the tower some short and striking sentences from the New Testament, so that the stranger while impressed with the visible works of the Almighty, is led to listen in silence to the saving lessons of his written word. Benevolence, too, is associated in this retreat with taste and piety; for, at a little distance from the tower, there is a private hospital, erected and supported by the proprietor, where a number of destitute and afflicted Genevese, Protestant and Catholic without distinction, are lodged and cared for, receiving, if they choose, in addition to temporal comforts, the advantages of religious worship and instruction. On the walls of the apartments suitable passages from the sacred Scriptures are also inscribed, for the benefit both of the inmates and visitors; the first that strikes the eye on entering being “prepare to meet thy God!” From the casual reading of these passages effects have resulted of a deeply affecting character, but which, not having sought leave, I do not consider myself at liberty to publish. The stranger in Geneva has missed a treat, who has left it, without visiting *Bessinge*.

spiritual influence spreads from land to land, and that the *little leaven* is silently, but effectually at work, under the energy of the divine Spirit, touching one mass here, and another there, until the whole be leavened.

On all hands I heard of the acceptable character, and excellent results, of the late visit of Mr. Lacroix to Geneva, and to various parts of Switzerland. With the name of this able and honoured missionary British Christians are familiar. Born in Switzerland, having its prevailing language vernacular to him, intimately acquainted with its usages and its religious condition, Mr. Lacroix, on his return from India, after an absence of twenty years, was received by his countrymen with general favour, and by the christian portion of the community with warm affection. In Geneva, where the pulpits of the national church were opened to him, he attracted large and admiring crowds; his pathetic statements and appeals were listened to with intense feeling; and the effect of his visit, by the divine blessing, was not only to fan the flame of missionary zeal, but, it is said, to awaken in the breasts of many who heard him, concern for the things that belong to their own peace. The visit of Mr. Lacroix to Switzerland affords a favourable example of the re-active influence of christian missions on the countries from which the missionary labourers have gone forth, and of the effects produced by the temporary return of eminent missionaries among the churches at home. Nor can it be doubted, that Mr. Lacroix has been honoured by God to impart an impulse to the advancement of pure religion in Geneva.

I must not omit to notice the English Episcopalian congregation, under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Mr. Hare. This congregation is accommodated in one of the national churches, the smallest in the city; and it assembles twice every Lord's day, at hours different from those at which the worship in the national church is observed. The congregation consists partly of English residents, but chiefly of English visitors, and seemed to me to amount to from three to four hundred. Mr. Hare is decidedly evangelical in his sentiments, a faithful preacher of the gospel of the grace of God, and a modest and excellent man; nor can I doubt that such a ministry as his must be blessed to many. By the brethren of the *Oratoire*, and other christian Genevese, he is regarded with warm affection, and is justly considered a valuable auxiliary and fellow-worker in the cause of their common Lord.

From the preceding statements, I persuade myself, my readers will be able to form a tolerably correct estimate of the external indications which Geneva presents of an improved and advancing condition of true religion. In 1814, as we have seen, religion was all but extinct; at least, "the things that remained were ready to die." Since that period, the change has been progressive and great. The formation of the church of the Pelisserie, with its two hundred and fifty members—the conversion, the ejection, and the labours of Dr. Malan, surrounded by his christian flock of more than a hundred—the visit of Mr. Haldane, and its still remaining fruits—the confederation of the four eminent men of the *Oratoire*—the Evangelical Society,

with its pregnant schools, and its fourscore indefatigable agents—the English congregation under an evangelical instructor—and the symptoms of returning life in some members of the church itself, these events which the last thirty years have witnessed, may well console our Genevese friends amidst all their solicitude and sorrow, and must draw from their hearts, and from ours on their behalf, the grateful and joyous acknowledgment, “the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” Nor, I am persuaded, can the facts included in the preceding relation, either respecting the fall, or the begun rising again of this portion of the church, be known, without deepening in the hearts of British Christians their religious interest in Geneva. Reflecting, too, on what we have received from Geneva, and on the debt we owe her in return, can we shut our ears to her calls for British aid, if not by money, (although *that*, if needed, will not be wanting,) at least by fraternal co-operation and fervent prayer? It were well did prayer ascend to our Father in heaven more abundantly from British Christians for their Genevese brethren, that such good words as these, which it hath pleased God to commit to record, to animate the desires and hopes of his children, may be fulfilled to his people in that land:—“I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. . . . I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night. . . . Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, nor shall thy land any more be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called

Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. Thou shalt also be for a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."

It would be a deviation from my purpose to attempt any detailed account of the state of religion in the other Swiss Cantons; nor was it in my power to obtain information as definite, or as full, in regard to them, as I have given respecting Geneva.

In all the Protestant Cantons, I believe there are institutions similar to the Evangelical Society of Geneva, not, indeed, as including a Theological Institution, but domestic and foreign evangelization. I had the pleasure of attending the anniversary of the Evangelical Society of the Canton Vaud, at Lausanne, the proceedings and the spirit of which were striking and gratifying. The meetings were held on three successive days. Pastors and other deputies assembled from all parts of the Canton—representatives of societies were present, and were heard, I believe, from almost every Protestant Canton of the Swiss Confederation, and from various parts of France—preaching and devotional exercises were added to written reports and oral addresses—the spacious mansion of a devout proprietor in the vicinity of Lausanne, was opened on the evening of the second of those days, where, after simple refreshments were administered on the beautiful lawn to the hundreds who congregated from the Canton, and to strangers from many lands, the whole assembly were accommodated within doors, or at the windows, and devotional exercises, and scriptural addresses, with

conversational and eloquent discussion, on topics of vital interest to the cause of God on the continent, occupied the remainder of the evening. On the following day, the friends of the Society met in a church in Lausanne, a plain but large place of worship, where for five hours, and these business hours, an assembly of one thousand at least, composed, as I judged from their appearance, chiefly of the middle and working classes, hung on the lips of the various speakers.

It was very gratifying to observe these symptoms of spiritual life in a region where, at one period, religion had so greatly declined—in which about twenty years ago, when its revival was in progress, so much annoyance, such persecution, indeed, was experienced by its friends—and where the national church still chooses to remain the abject and helpless vassal of the State. In the established church of Vaud, as in that of Geneva, there is nothing worthy of being called discipline, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are dispensed to the people promiscuously, who, as in Geneva, flock to the communion in thoughtless crowds.

The population of this Canton is given at 164,686; its parishes are 144; and the number of its pastors about 170—a very sufficient supply of spiritual overseers of this class, for such a population, not very widely scattered. Of the pastors, I was told by a resident minister, about one half are understood to hold evangelical sentiments. There are besides 134 *Impositionary Ministers*, (*Ministres Impositionnaires*) as they are denominated; or persons set apart to the

ministerial office, but not yet admitted to the pastorate. How these stand in regard to doctrine or piety, I know not.

The government of the church affords a curious and painful specimen of a mixture of the secular with the sacred. In the election of their pastors, the people, in this free State, have just nothing whatever to do. The clergy of the district name two, and the Council of State appoint one of the two, to the vacant charge. The whole parochial clergy are divided into four sections or *classes*, as they are called, over the meetings of each of which one is chosen to preside for three years, under the name of *Dean*. The *National Synod* consists of delegates from the four classes, with a mixture of laymen appointed by the Council of State; but this Synod cannot meet except when convoked by the Council of State. The whole "administration of the ecclesiastical laws and regulations" is conducted by the "Ecclesiastical Commission, presided over by a Councillor of State, and consisting of four members, two ecclesiastics, and two laymen." The decisions of all these bodies, the Classes, the Synod, and the Ecclesiastical Commission, are submitted to the Council of State, to be "confirmed or modified," as it shall deem proper. In the event of an accusation respecting "doctrine and instruction," being brought against a minister or pastor, the case is submitted to a *Jury* of twelve, consisting of delegates from the Classes, and the sentence of this Jury is definitive. But even in such cases the Council of State steps in, at the very commencement of the process, and first of all deter-

mines, after its own fashion of examination and decision, whether there be any just ground of accusation.

Disgusted with this state of things, or convinced of the sinfulness involved in a state alliance on the part of the christian church, many pious ministers have left the communion of the national church of Vaud; and, amidst much opposition and discouragement, have cast themselves for their temporal support on that provision which the Head of the church has appointed to his faithful servants.

Nine churches, and as many *curés* of the Roman Catholic persuasion, under the ecclesiastical superintendence of the Bishop of Fribourg, enjoy a legal recognition in this Canton. But the Council of State acts with Catholics as with Protestants, and insists on its appointing the *curé* as it does the pastor. Here, as in all other places, the Roman Catholics, flushed with zeal and hope, are indefatigable in their efforts for the increase of their numbers, the efficiency of their schemes, and the ostentatious yet attractive display of their power and influence.

In regard to the other Protestant Cantons, I must content myself with remarking in general, that, as far as my information carried me, the three following facts seem to sum up their story, that in all the Protestant churches religion had exceedingly declined—that in them all there has been an improvement, varying in its degree in different places, yet apparently progressive—and that among them, and around them, the energy of Rome is greater at this day, than it ever has been since the period of the Reformation.

I cannot, however, altogether omit an allusion to the present condition of a most interesting people in that vicinity, who, in the Providence of God, have been set forth as examples of a persevering steadfastness in the faith, and a patience in tribulation, certainly without a parallel; who, by efforts of which history enables us to catch but glimpses, laboured not only to keep alive the light of truth during the ages of darkness, but to transmit it to other lands, to France, Spain, Germany, Bohemia, Poland, Britain, and even to Italy itself. I refer to the *Waldenses* still occupying some valleys in Piedmont. If ever any church was symbolized more appropriately than another by *the bush burning but not consumed*, it is theirs. Every rock on their mountains has been stained, every vale and cavern in which they sought shelter and rest, has been soaked with the blood of these saints. In every land to which they fled as exiles, and which they endeavoured to enrich with the knowledge of Christ, the rage of Rome overtook them, and cruelties of which Rome only, drunk with the blood of saints, was capable, were resorted to, for the purpose of effecting their apostacy or extermination. The former was found impossible, the latter, in some cases, was accomplished.*

* After narrating a series of the most revolting barbarities, Dr. M'Crie, in his "History of the Reformation in Italy," thus proceeds:—"Horrid as these facts are, they fall short of the barbarity perpetrated on the same people at Montalto in the year 1566. . . I shall give the account in the words of a Roman Catholic, servant to Ascanio Caraccioli, who witnessed the scene. The letter in

The latest information I was able to obtain respecting this interesting people, was from two individuals, the one a pastor of a dissenting church in Geneva,

which he gives it was published in Italy, along with other narratives of the bloody transaction. 'Most illustrious Sir,—Having written you from time to time what has been done here in the affair of heresy, I have now to inform you of the dreadful justice which began to be executed on the Lutherans,' (the Waldensian colony of four thousand who had been long settled in Italy) 'early this morning, being the 11th of June. And, to tell you the truth, I can compare it to nothing but the slaughter of so many sheep. They were all shut up in one house in a sheep-fold. The executioner went, and, bringing out one of them, covered his face with a napkin, or *benda*, as we call it, led him out to a field near the house, and, causing him to kneel down, cut his throat with a knife. Then taking off the bloody napkin, he went and brought out another, whom he put to death in the same manner. In this way, the whole number, amounting to eighty-eight men, were butchered. I leave you to figure to yourself the lamentable spectacle, for I can scarcely refrain from tears while I write; nor was there any person who, after witnessing the execution of one, could stand to look on a second. The meekness and patience with which they went to death and martyrdom was incredible, some of them at their death professed themselves of the same faith with us, but the greater part died in their cursed obstinacy. All the old men met their death with cheerfulness, but the young exhibited symptoms of fear. I shudder while I think of the executioner with the bloody knife in his teeth, the dripping napkin in his hand, and his arms besmeared with gore, going to the house and taking out one after another, just as a butcher does the sheep which he means to kill. According to orders, waggons are already come to carry away the dead bodies, which are appointed to be quartered, and hung up in the public roads from one end of Calabria to the other. . . . To day a decree is passed, that a hundred grown-up women shall be put to the question, and afterwards executed. . . . The heretics taken in Calabria amount to 1,600, all of whom are condemned, but only 88 have as yet been put to death. This

who had spent a month in the valleys somewhat more than a year ago; and the other, my much esteemed friend Dr. Baird from the United States, now well

people came originally from the valley of Angrogna, near Savoy, and in Calabria are called Ultra-montani. Four other places in the kingdom of Naples are inhabited by the same race, but I do not know that they behave ill; for they are a simple unlettered people, entirely occupied with the spade and plough, and I am told, show themselves sufficiently religious in the hour of death.' After confirming this account by the testimony of a Neapolitan historian, Dr. M'C. adds, "By the time that the persecutors were glutted with blood, it was not difficult to dispose of the prisoners who remained. The men were put to the Spanish galleys; the women and children were sold for slaves; and, with the exception of a few who renounced their faith, the whole colony was exterminated. 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,' may the race of the Waldenses say, 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: my blood, the violence done to me, to my flesh, be upon thee—Rome!'" *

Need we wonder that the bloody tale of Waldensian suffering touched the mighty muse of Milton, and drew forth the following strains:—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones
Forget not; in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans,
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who, having learn'd thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe!"

* History of the Reformation in Italy, pp. 263- 266

known in this country, as the author of the very best book on the religion of America.* Dr. B. spent a few days in the valleys in the month of August last.

There are two valleys occupied by this people—the one about twenty miles in length, having some minor valleys, or mountain recesses, connected with it—the other somewhat smaller. The former belongs exclusively to the Vaudois (Waldenses); of the latter they have only one side. The mountains are lofty and grand, their sides abounding with wood, frequent cultivated patches, and those *chalets*, or wooden houses, of multiform construction, which are so common, and form such striking objects, in the picturesque scenery of Switzerland. There are several villages scattered through these valleys. The houses are described as small, rather dark, not remarkable for cleanliness, and the inhabitants as generally poor. The cattle and the human inhabitants have a common entrance, but have separate locations within doors. The people, however, are almost all taught to read, and for the most part have small libraries. Their number does not now exceed twenty thousand.

Their church government resembles that of Geneva, and is under the superintendence of the *Synod*, which includes all the clergy, while a committee of that body, called the *Venerable Table*, (answering to our word *Board*,) is the *Executive* of management. Prior to the Reformation, the doctrines of the Vaudois were pure; and on corresponding with Calvin, they were

* Religion in the United States of America. 1844.

overjoyed to find a substantial agreement betwixt his doctrines and their own. In his turn, Calvin felt deep interest in the welfare of this suffering and holy brotherhood, hid in Alpine recesses, so near, and who had been in Christ before him; and, among other tokens of his regard, he induced the government of Geneva to found some bursaries for the gratuitous education at the Genevan Academy of young men from the valleys, intended for the holy ministry. But Calvin could not foresee to what results his benevolence would be abused in future times. The Arianism and Neology of Geneva were imported by these bursars into their native valleys, and in these regions in which the truth as it is in Jesus had been kept pure for so many centuries, and from which it had been transmitted to so many lands, it was well nigh suppressed, or renounced, for a season; the malignant influence of Geneva accomplishing by guile, that which Rome was unable to effect by violence. But God did not forget these valleys. By the labours of Felix Neff and others—by the humble but untiring efforts of a private christian native, yet alive, Antoine Blanc, who is looked up to by the best of the people as a spiritual father—and by other means, the knowledge of the truth in its quickening and sanctifying power has wonderfully revived; of the twenty-two ministers in the valleys, of whom fifteen are pastors, all, or nearly all, are now sound in the faith; they have recently published a decidedly scriptural confession as the token of their union in the truth; and, with various degrees of ability and zeal, are striving together for the faith of the gospel. Nor does

education recede ; but on the contrary, as far as reading, writing, and other common attainments are concerned, is in a very advancing state. A British officer, Colonel Beckwith, has been a great and steady benefactor of the Vaudois. For some years he has lived for the most part among them, has built at his own expense many schools, including a College or Grammar School, and has scattered comfort wherever he has gone. One might almost envy the sacred pleasure of this generous man, as he walks among the humble and grateful people. The blessing of the Vaudois comes upon him ! They have not been altogether neglected by this country. Cromwell, with his sturdy determination, stood forth as their champion in his day, and raised a considerable sum besides for their relief. George III. also ordered a collection to be made for them in the English churches, which, with donations, amounted to about ten thousand pounds ; and some of our benevolent societies have been supplying them with what they esteem above gold and silver, the word of God. The name of England on their side is of more value to them than money, and England is bound by the faith of ancient treaties to act as their protector. And they need British favour as their best human shield against the foe that watches them. Rome has still her lynx eye on these valleys ; and they are under the dominion of the king of Sardinia, than whom a more priest-ridden weakling, it is said, has seldom reposed on an earthly throne. Let us trust that He who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, will graciously protect the poor Vaudois, and that safe under his Almighty guardianship, the inhabi-

tants of these rocks may sing, and shout from the tops of their mountains.*

* Since the addresses contained in these pages were delivered, the article on the Waldenses in the last *Quarterly* has appeared. It is honest, able, and kind, although, naturally enough, mixed with unconcealed sorrow that the Vaudois are, and have ever been, *Bishopless*. The evidence that England and *Sardinia* are jointly bound by treaty for their protection is amply elucidated—the vexations and perils to which they are still subjected are faithfully given—and the king of *Sardinia* is unceremoniously subjected to unsparing critical flagellation. It is a pity that the writer does not seem acquainted with Blair's *History of the Waldenses*, 2 vols. 8vo—a whole digest, a very library of Waldensian lore, not, indeed, bound, gilt, lettered, or even shelved, but, with facts and documents past numbering, and in style as grotesque as could be wished, thrown in a heap at the feet of the reader.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY AND CONDITION OF BELGIUM.

BELGIUM, although one of the small European States, has much to recommend it to our warm sympathy, from its past history, its present condition, and its vicinity and general relations to this country.

It is of inconsiderable extent, being less than two hundred miles in length, and little more than half as much in breadth ; but its population is very dense, amounting to about four millions.

From the position of Belgium, having the great States of France and Germany on its confines, it has experienced great changes of condition, and has been for ages the theatre of vast and well-known military movements, with a full share of their usual accompaniments—devastation and carnage. In the time of Cæsar, *the Belgæ*, whom he denominates “the bravest of all the Gauls,” were pre-eminently distinguished among the barbarous nations for their resolute resistance to the power and pretensions of Rome, although

ultimately they too were compelled to yield to the discipline and strength of the Roman Legions. When the empire was broken by the incursion of its uncivilized neighbours, Belgium was overrun by fierce tribes from the north-east, principally Saxons and Franks. Subsequently, Charles the Great of France appended it to his empire. It was afterwards held for a time by various independent chiefs, of whom the most powerful were the Dukes of Burgundy, from whom it passed, by marriage, to the house of Austria, in the sixteenth century; and when, on the abdication of Charles the Fifth, that empire was divided into two branches, the German and Spanish, Belgium had the misfortune to fall under the latter power, at that time held by a gloomy and savage bigot, Philip II. When the yoke of Spain was broken by the Seven United Provinces, Belgium failed in her struggle for liberty and remained under the Spanish power till the beginning of last century, when it was ceded to Austria, under whose dominion it remained, till seized by the armies of republican France in 1794. With that country it continued incorporated till the downfall of Napoleon. It was then constituted into one kingdom along with the Northern Provinces; until, finally, in 1830, the Belgian Provinces revolted from the Dutch sovereign under whom their neighbours had placed them, detached themselves from the Northern States, and formed the separate kingdom of Belgium, as it now exists.*

* Malte Brun.

The internal condition of this long abused and down-trodden region has been very remarkable. Although so often the prey of power—handed over unceremoniously from one master to another—the chosen arena for the contests of other nations in the game of war, Belgium is distinguished in the annals of Europe by early civilization—by the extent and splendour of its cities—the astonishing enterprize of its energetic community—its eminence in the fine arts, and its almost unrivalled agriculture. Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, Louvain, and above all, Antwerp, stand conspicuous among cities in that period when Europe was but beginning to awake from the slumber of ages. Of Antwerp, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is related that “the city contained two hundred thousand inhabitants; but the floating multitude, the world, which pressed toward it on every side, almost exceeds belief. About five hundred vessels entered and left its harbours daily; about two hundred carriages daily passed through its gates; upwards of two thousand waggons arrived weekly from France, Germany, and Lorraine. The exports and imports seem infinite in variety and immense in quantity.”* This state of prosperity was crushed beneath the tyrannic power of Spain; but Belgium has risen again, and presents, at this day, a picture of national enterprize and rapid progression in the arts of life probably unequalled by any European state, our own excepted. Its agriculture rivals the best examples which England, or even Scotland, can

* Edin. Ency.—Art. Netherlands.

present. The face of the country, long intersected by roads and canals, now presents every where the life and stir of the modern railway. Its towns are now rivalling our own busiest marts in the variety and extent of their manufactures. In ascending some of its lofty towers—the chief means of commanding an extensive view of a country so flat—the vast cultivated plains, the rich woodlands, the spacious rivers, and the towns and villages in thick succession, can be equalled only in the richest portions of England, betwixt which and the Belgic scenery the resemblance is striking.* Of other and more important views of the condition of this interesting country at this day, I shall have occasion to speak afterwards.

By far the most important aspect of Belgic history is that which relates to its connexion with the Protestant Reformation. From its proximity to that country in which the Reformation had its birth, and to those other States in which its influence was felt the earliest—from the intercourse with those nations which its commercial character produced, and from the general intelligence diffused among its active and enterprising people, preparations existed, under the providence of God, for the early introduction into Belgium of the doctrines of the reformers. And, indeed, it was so. Belgium was not insensible to that new power by which the rest of Europe was about to be stirred and shaken; strong rays of evangelic light now pierced the darkness, in which, like other

* Chambers's Tour.

lands, it had been so long involved ; and in the towns and villages, in the colleges, and even the convents, of Belgium, there were many whose bosoms glowed with the same sacred fire that burned with so much strength in the great German reformer. There, as elsewhere, the Scriptures were brought forth from their long imprisonment ; their divine doctrines, accompanied by the grace of the Spirit of God, were received by many with faith and love, and became the power of God unto salvation ; men awoke, as if from a dream, to an indignant detection of the errors, the fables, the pollutions, the absurdities, which the Romish church had accumulated and imposed ; what was clearly seen and strongly felt, was zealously taught and proclaimed ; converts multiplied on all hands ; in all the chief cities—Mons, Tournay, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp—churches were gathered ; and, in spite of the outcries, the threats, the violence of the blind and interested votaries of the falling superstition, it appeared, for a time, doubtful whether Popery would be able to maintain itself much longer in Belgium ; and, to the eye of man, it seemed, that the prospects of the Southern Provinces of the Netherlands were not less auspicious than those of the Northern.

In the sovereign arrangements of providence, however, when Holland rose, Belgium fell ; by a train of events the most disastrous, the cause of evil triumphed ; and, after a season of noble but fruitless conflict, the light of the Belgic Reformation was quenched in blood. I question whether we have in modern history a narrative more touching, and more revolt-

ing,—touching, as it respects the faith, patience, and heroism of the martyred saints—and revolting, as it details the remorseless cruelties, the tyrannic rage, and the senseless and wicked accusations of their enemies, than that which has been supplied by Brandt in his “History of the Reformation in the Low Countries.” Imagine such a proclamation as the following, issued in the name of no less a personage than Charles V. “It seems to us that the said Martin Luther is not a human creature, but a devil in the shape of a man, and in the habit of a monk, that he may the more easily occasion the eternal death and destruction of mankind.” By the same proclamation it was forbidden to publish any book, which mentioned the Holy Scripture, or contained an explanation of passages of the Bible, without leave from the Ordinary of the place, or from those whom he should appoint in his own name, with the consent and approbation of the Faculty of Divinity in the nearest University.* Thus encouraged by the Emperor, the work of persecution from that period, 1521, went forward; and all the forms of suffering which false zeal has been accustomed to stimulate its votaries to inflict, were henceforth familiar to the Belgians,—fines—incarceration—banishment—mutilation of the body—the rack—the gibbet—drowning—burning alive—burying alive, these were the weapons, worthy of the cause, which the friends of Rome gloried in wielding against the reformers and the reformation. The following is

* Brandt, vol. i. p. 16.

the short account given by Brandt of the first Belgic martyrs. "The Austin Friars of Antwerp were violently persecuted. They had read Luther's writings and approved them. Many of these friars were imprisoned. The prior made his escape out of prison. Some retracted; but three persisted in their opinions. They were degraded, and declared to be heretics, upon a scaffold, at Brussels, July 1, 1523. On the same day, two of them expired in the midst of flames, with an undaunted courage. Being carried to the place of execution, they said with a loud voice that they suffered as Christians. When they were fastened to the stake, and the fire was lighted, they repeated the creed, and sung *Te Deum* alternately, till the flames deprived them of the use of speech. The third was carried back to prison, and privately executed. This is the first blood that was shed in the Low Countries upon account of religion, since Luther undertook to reform the church."* Referring to this first sanguinary outburst of false zeal, Erasmus with his usual coolness and sarcasm remarks—"Two men have been burnt at Brussels, and from that time the doctrine of Luther has began to be in vogue in that city." In the following passage we have a graphic description of the measures of the persecutors. "On the 14th October, 1529, a new proclamation was issued against the Lutherans, by which all those who, after having abjured their errors, had relapsed into them, were condemned to be burnt. As for others, the men,

* Brandt, vol. i. p. 20.

were condemned to die by the sword, the women to be buried alive. All converts were offered their lives, provided they were not relapses, or actually prisoners. Every body was forbidden to receive into his house any heretic, upon pain of death, and confiscation of goods. All persons suspected of heresy were excluded from honourable employments, and the better to find out heretics, one half of their estates, not exceeding the sum of a hundred Flemish livres, was promised, as a reward to the informants.* The following is an example of the spirit exhibited by the martyrs in their last trying hours. "The prisoner" John Van Bacha, "was then carried to the place of execution. When he went by the prison, to which many persons were confined for the faith, he cried out, *Behold my dear brethren I am ready to suffer martyrdom, cheer up, like faithful soldiers of Christ, and being animated by my example, defend the truths of the gospel, against all unrighteousness.* The prisoners did no sooner hear these words, than they clapt their hands and shouted; and in order to honour the martyrdom of their friend, they sung *Te Deum*, the *Certamen Magnum*, and the hymn, *O beata martyrum solemnia*; and they did not give over singing till the martyr had expired. When he was fastened to the stake, he cried out; *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? Death is swallowed up by the victory of Jesus Christ.* At last the martyr expired, after he had spoke these words: *Lord Jesus, forgive*

* Brandt, vol. i. p. 32.

*them, for they know not what they do. O Son of God, remember me : have mercy upon me !”**

But I must abstain from such details. The determination of Charles, from despotism, or from bigotry, or from both, to banish heresy from the Netherlands, and to re-establish popery in all its former exclusiveness and rigour, seemed to grow as he advanced in life. No fewer than fifty thousand persons are reported to have perished on the scaffold under his terrific reign. “No privacy however sacred, was secure ; no age, or sex or rank, was spared ; and this once cheerful land was overshadowed with grief, terror, and silence.” † On the abdication of Charles, Philip, his son, succeeded him—the inferior of his father in talent, but exceeding him in the sullen and heartless severity of his character. Inheriting the dominions of his father, he also inherited his resolution, by every means in his power, to extinguish the Reformation in all his dominions. It gives us a striking view of the root which the Reformation had taken in the Netherlands, and the extent to which it had spread, that after all done by Charles, so much remained for his son to execute. It seemed as if persecution at its utmost had for a time proved a failure—as if the Belgian Christians might be slain, but could not be intimidated ;—for the country was roused ; it seemed to have become one vast fortress, which, over its whole extent, required to be battered and captured by the enemy ; every nook of which was up again as soon as it had been for a moment

* Brandt, p. 26.

† Edin. Encyc.—Article, Netherlands.

abandoned by the victors. Suffice it to say, that in this reign, under the government of the Cardinal Gonsalva first, and next, of the Duke of Alva, all that Charles had done was greatly outdone—that the land was overrun by a brutal soldiery spreading over its surface rapine and blood—that one hundred thousand families, of whom upwards of nine thousand were from Ghent alone, persecuted in their own country, fled from it, according to the command, and from the love of, their Saviour, into foreign lands—and that the boast of the Duke of Alva, on his return to Spain, was, that beside all that had fallen by the sword of his soldiery, “within the space of five years, he had delivered eighteen thousand heretics into the hands of the executioner.”* We often speak, and justly, of the sufferings our pious forefathers endured for the Gospel’s sake, and for ours; but how inconsiderable were all the sufferings inflicted on Britain by papal violence, or by those Episcopalian persecutors, who, without the name, displayed the spirit of Rome, compared with what our brethren in the Netherlands endured under this single reign! From her trials Britain emerged; but Belgium sunk under hers. There, as in Spain and Italy, the friends of the

* “Upwards of eighteen thousand heretics had suffered by the hand of the public executioner; besides a much greater number whom he (Alva) had put to the sword in the towns he had taken, and in the field of battle. . . . Wives were punished with the utmost severity for affording shelter to their husbands whom the Council had condemned; children for performing the same offices to their parents; and in Utrecht a father was executed for allowing his son, who had returned from banishment, to lodge under his roof for one night.” *Watson’s Philip II.* vol. 2, book 12th.

Reformation fell, or fled, and left their desolate country in the hands of the enemy. From the peace of 1579, when the Northern Provinces succeeded in establishing their blood-bought freedom, the Reformation may be said to have perished in Belgium.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to remark, that from that period it seems possible to trace a succession of witnesses for the truth, even in Belgium; few, obscure, hidden ones—living memorials of the past—living anticipations of better days to follow—living sparks, kept from utter extinction, amidst the ashes that covered them—precious seeds, preserved amidst battered and ruined harvests, the remains of a former, the tokens of a coming, fertility. The number of pious persons who remained in Belgium, as in France, after the fatal triumph of persecution, will never be known till the day of revelation. The more intrepid and influential were all gone; but in many quarters not a few remained—bound to their country by ties which they could not unloose, or who, from penury, had no means of escape; not a few meek and obscure ones, whom the Lord mercifully hid in this day of his fierce anger. The vigilant intolerance of the merciless enemy, eager to hunt out the very poorest and weakest of the flock, often detected such in their retreats; and many solitary fugitives, long after the great body had disappeared, finding their country intolerable, and their temptations too many and strong for flesh to fight with, one after another bade family, and friends, and home, adieu; and, although with sad and broken hearts for those they left behind, and for the expiring

cause of God, sought the nearest asylum where they might breathe the air of freedom, enjoy communion with the people of God, and worship unmolested the God of their fathers. Of one individual, it is related, that "he took farewell of his native village singing the sorrowful strains of the eighty-eighth Psalm, while leaving behind him his wife and children, who would not quit the land of idolatry and wickedness." Still those who lingered behind did not all bow to the dominant superstition. Although every Protestant minister was silenced—all social worship strictly prohibited—their Bibles, and other books, sought for and burned, and every detected recusant punished—all did not deny the faith, and make shipwreck of a good conscience. Deprived of the past enjoyments of the sanctuary, and often weeping when they remembered Sion, they still worshipped God, even in the midst of Babylon; the Bible, though torn from their dwellings, lived in their hearts; though no living pastor now cheered them with his voice, the remembrance of those holy men who had spoken to them the word of God stirred all that was in them; they secreted their Bibles in holes in the walls, or in the thatch of their houses, and drew them thence, in guarded privacy, to cheer the watches of the night. Indeed, it is affirmed, that when old Protestant dwellings have been taken down, some of those relics have occasionally been discovered amidst the rubbish. The following anecdote I select from an excellent paper on the subject recently published:—"Said the old Estrebech, about one hundred and fifty years ago, In my youth there was but one

Bible in our neighbourhood, which was in the possession of a few Christians, who met secretly during the night to peruse its sacred contents, and to instruct and strengthen their souls. This sacred book was a source of terror to the Popish priests, and to the faithful adherents of the Romish church: they sought after the sacred volume with avidity, and searched every place where they thought it might be secreted. The village constable had received orders to go, with some of his emissaries, and carefully search every house where there were any hopes of finding it. This Bible was the property of four individuals, fathers of families, who were miners. One day, their wives being from home, they were obliged, when going to their work, to leave their precious treasure in charge of a young girl about eight or nine years of age, who remained at home to take care of her little brother. These worthy people thought it desirable to hide their Bible in the bottom of the cradle, charging the little girl, at the same time, if any one should come during their absence, continually to rock the child, even if it should be asleep. The poor little girl, taught from her infancy to prize this inestimable treasure, strictly observed the orders she had received, when the persecutors entered. They began immediately to search every corner of the house, from top to bottom; but the object of their search was not to be found. Disappointed and discouraged, they were about to retire, when one of them observed that they had forgotten to look into the cradle. What was the poor girl's distress on hearing these words, and the anguish of her mind on see-

ing the holy volume torn from her! But still it was nothing to that of the parents, when they returned from their labour in the evening, and learned their irreparable loss. Their grief was beyond expression; they wept aloud, crying out—‘Oh! dear Bible! precious book!—what will become of us without thee? Better had it been for us, that our cottages had been torn down, or devoured by the flames.’ Thus a succession of witnesses was preserved; and it is stated that, even at this day, many Roman Catholics remember, with some degree of interest, their old Protestant ancestors, and display a freedom from that embittered hatred of evangelical truth, and all who hold it, which distinguish the other adherents of the Church of Rome.”*

In no quarter does the succession seem so easily traceable as in the vicinity of Mons, particularly in the small town of Dour, and the adjoining village of Paturages. In these places shattered remains of christian congregations were found, down to the commencement of last century. About 1700, “among those charged with contumacy, was a woman advanced in years, who, never having been herself taught to read the Word, had become acquainted with many of the most precious passages by hearing her husband read to her. The devout Fenelon, at that time visiting his diocese, came to Dour, and conversed with this woman, who replied to all his questions, by quoting verses of the sacred volume, and who especially

* Protestantism in Belgium, by the Rev. E. M. Rate.

repeated those precious words of the Apostle—‘There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ Touched with what he saw and heard, the venerable archbishop gave her, in writing, a paper, insuring to her protection from all molestation, and sent her away, saying—‘My good woman, pray for me.’ About the year 1750, a few of these Protestants began to assemble, for the worship of God, in the house of one of their number; and, although the vigilance of the persecutors soon prevented this, in 1784 the Protestants of Dour obtained deliverance by the passing of an act of toleration by Joseph II. of Austria. From that period their history is distinct. They soon applied to a devoted Protestant minister, named Devisme, who itinerated among the Protestants in the north of France, and whose labours in his circuit allowed him to visit them only once in three months. For a considerable time this excellent man seems to have pursued his work without molestation; but in 1789, while engaged in Protestant service, he was seized and carried to prison in Mons, where he was detained for forty-eight days. On his liberation, he seems to have resumed his labours, for in 1802 he was subjected to imprisonment, on account of them, for one day. From that time to the year 1817, he continued to pursue his silent course of usefulness, at which period he was succeeded by his son, who continues to preach the gospel in the same place. The adjoining village of Paturages, where Protestantism was all but extinct, appears to have derived some considerable revival from Dour, for, in 1785, Mr. Devisme prevailed

on the Protestants, who were willing to hear the gospel, to have a service on Sabbath in their own village. These means continued till 1820, when the younger Mr. Devisme first began to visit them, and found them assembled, few in number, in the house of a poor old blind woman. From that time they have increased in number, knowledge, and zeal." *

Having thus given these brief sketches of the past condition of religion in Belgium, I shall now advert to its present state; and without declining other sources of information, I shall avail myself chiefly of a very able, well-arranged, and valuable manuscript, prepared by a pious and intelligent Protestant minister in Belgium, so recently as the close of the year 1842. The paper was sent to the committee of the London Missionary Society, by the kindness of one of whose secretaries I have been favoured with its perusal. The writer is the Rev. Mr. Panchaud, of Brussels, secretary of the Belgian Evangelical Society.

The population of Belgium, it is well known, consists of two portions, very diverse, both in national character and in language; scarcely, I apprehend, less so than the English and Welsh, in South Britain, or the Lowland and Highland population in our own country. The two Belgic classes are—the *Flemings* and the *Walloons*; the former occupying the northern, the latter the southern, portions of the country. The Flemings are described as not a little heavy, monotonous, and phlegmatic, like their respectable

* Mr Rate's paper.

Dutch neighbours; yet, like them, very laborious and patient: the Walloons have more of the sprightliness and vivacity of that mercurial race on whose immediate confines they are situated. The language of the Flemings is denominated from the people using it, the *Flemish*; and is, I believe, (though I am altogether unacquainted with it,) a dialect of the German or Dutch: that of the Walloons is a corrupt *patois* of the French; but all agree that the French is spreading rapidly, and that a great proportion of those to whom Flemish is vernacular, can now read, or at least speak, French.

The constitution of 1830 totally changed the previous laws in regard to religion. As I shall presently notice, nearly the entire population is Roman Catholic; but when Belgium was united with Holland by the settlement of 1814, Protestantism was the religion of the court, as it was and is that of Holland; and almost every thing depended chiefly on the will of the monarch. But the ultra-Roman Catholics, who are chiefly Flemish, as well as the more liberal and semi-infidel portion, who are chiefly Walloons, disliked this Dutch ascendancy; the former, because it was Protestant—the latter, because it was despotic. Both parties concurring in a wish to throw off the yoke, and other circumstances favouring, the Revolution of 1830 took place, and gave origin to a new constitution, which, as it respects religion, has the following provisions:—"That all parties shall be on a perfect equality as to religious matters—that there shall be no state religion—and, that the civil authorities shall

have no power to interfere in matters religious, to appoint or displace a minister, or to impose laws and regulations for any religious body." In regard to public worship, it is provided—"That no person shall be compelled to take part in any religious ceremony, or to attend any place of worship to which he may object." *Liberty of association*, as it is denominated, is guaranteed in the fullest manner. This last is justly regarded as of the highest importance, and is a contrast with the state of things in France. Both countries have inserted in their charter—"Liberty of worship for all;" but in France this has become almost a dead letter, from the want of liberty of association. In that country, it is said, no meeting can be held of more than twenty persons, without the consent of the civil authorities; so that no work of evangelization can be carried on publicly, where the authorities are hostile to the gospel. In Belgium, on the other hand, no authority can interfere with any religious meeting; nor is there any need of a permission to meet when and where it may be found convenient. It is curious that, in a Roman Catholic country, so much religious liberty should prevail. It seems to have sprung, under the guidance of Providence, from various co-operating causes—from the fear of Protestant influence, joined with the confidence that popular opinion, with liberty, would suffice to counteract it, on the part of the ultra-Catholics—and, probably, from an extreme pressure in its favour, on the part of the Walloon liberals. Here, unhappily, as in France, all parties receive support from the State;

Catholics of every hue, who have about £164,000 annually—Protestants, who receive £2,120—and Jewish Rabbis, to the small amount of £440. With these arrangements there are two subsidiary ones, which, in relation to religion, are of great value. The one is, *the liberty of the press*, which is most entire; the other respects *education*, which is equally untrammelled, as far as the law is concerned. Before the Revolution of 1830, no school could be opened but by the permission of government, and that permission was granted only to persons who had been first approved and licensed to teach; now there can be no hinderance to any person's opening a school, and teaching any thing he pleases.

Legal and practical liberty, however—liberty by right, and liberty in fact—are not always identical; and with all these laws on paper, there are impediments, which it is not improbable may be multiplied and strengthened, in carrying all the provisions of the law into practical operation. To perceive how applicable this remark is to Belgium, one must be acquainted with the real condition and character of the people. The Roman Catholic population is of two classes; the bigoted, and the liberal and semi-infidel. The former class includes the clergy, the aristocracy, the almost entire female part of the middle rank, and the bulk of the lower orders. Of this class, the writer to whom I allude thus speaks:—"All these persons are violently opposed to every thing which is not of the Roman Catholic Church, and as blindly attached to whatever belongs to it. The priests and aristocracy mutually

support and favour each other, whilst the former keep the poorer classes completely under their own domination, and that of the aristocracy. The number, power, and influence, of this portion of the community are immense, all of which are zealously devoted to the support of Popery." The liberal portion "includes the male members of the middle, and a small number of the better educated and lower classes of society. This party may be considered as negative opponents of ultra-Catholicism. Having no belief in the doctrines professed by their church, they treat every thing as matter of indifference; and, professing no religious principles of their own, they have little to oppose to the domination of their priests. The mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of this party being mostly under clerical guidance, the infidels themselves are also brought to submit to priest rule. When there is a marriage, a birth, or a burial, the priest is called in by female influence; and the father regards with indifference the mother's leading the child into all that mummary which he himself so thoroughly despises."

Indifferent to all religion, the liberal party often allow the zealots to exercise their whole influence with the government in favour of their own views; and the extent to which these zealots often prevail is proved by important facts. The following is one which, from its affinity with a recent ministerial measure in our own country is worthy of notice. "The bill," says the writer "was to regulate the government schools for poor children. It gave the direction of all the schools into the hands of the Bishops and inferior

clergy. The master must be approved, the books used in the schools examined by them. They are to give the religious instruction, and the moment they disapprove of any thing in the school, or refuse to attend, that moment the government will withdraw its support. In vain did the liberal party oppose the bill, as being an attack on the constitution. The power of the clergy prevailed. It will be easily conceived that the clergy take advantage of their present position." Indeed, that new life, that renovated energy, which, from whatever causes it may arise, and in whatever issues it may terminate, the Roman Catholic Church manifests at this day, seems very fully developed in Belgium. Mr. Panchaud gives very remarkable illustrations of this. The Virgin Mary nowhere receives more abundant homage; she is adored as divine; more prayers are offered to her than to God; and her mediation is regarded as indispensable to the enjoyment of the Divine favour. About twelve miles from Brussels, in a large village, there is a church of very miraculous history, in the traditionary accounts of which the Virgin figures as the chief performer; and a box of angelic manufacture, belonging to the Virgin, was by her favour procured, by means of which miracles were wrought in abundance, so that no doubt remained of its being a chosen instrument of the Mother of God to console and relieve all those who had recourse to her in their affliction. In addition to this box "the church contains a large piece of the cross on which Christ was crucified—a part of Christ's seamless coat—some of the Virgin's hair—her belt—her

scissors—the ivory needle with which the Mother of God sewed.” On the walls of a church in Mons, there is hung up the following prayer, addressed to the Virgin—“I salute you, my Divine Queen, amiable Mary, I adore and bless the design which God has of glorifying you in this holy place, and of glorifying himself in you. To contribute as much as in my power to the admirable purpose of the Supreme Majesty, and to render you the honour due to you, I cast myself, Holy Virgin, at the foot of the throne of your glory, and with my humble respects offer you, that which all heaven and earth render to you. Amiable Mediatrice between God and man, it is particularly in this holy place, Tongres, where you exercise this glorious quality, and where you open to poor mortals the treasures of divine favours, which without your aid Heaven would refuse. Refuge of the miserable, protectress of all who call upon you, condescend to pour on me your grace, and to keep your poor servant, who will do his utmost to proclaim at all times, and in all places your praise, and your honour, to the greater glory of God, and of his Holy Mother.”

Will the reader believe that the following application of the Lord's prayer to the Virgin “is translated from a card sold in the shops at Brussels, illuminated with gold and various colours,” and intended to aid the pious in that gay city, in their worship of the Mother of God? “Our Mother who art in heaven, O Mary, blessed be your name for ever, let your love come to all our hearts; let your desires be accomplished on the earth as in heaven; give us this

day grace and mercy, give us the pardon of our faults, as we hope from your unbounded goodness, and let us no more sink under temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

The energy with which the Belgic clergy are now devoting themselves to the cause of the church deserves to be known. Their numbers are great; four thousand five hundred and fifty being paid by the State, and a still greater number being supported by other means. They possess the strength arising from perfect unity of object and efforts; and in their labours they are indefatigable. Averse to popular education, when there is no chance of the people obtaining it by other means, they are now assiduous in its promotion, endeavouring by all means to have it in their own hands, and to employ it for their own purposes. Money is never wanting; for they have the unlimited control of the female part of the community, whose influence for the obtaining of funds they unscrupulously employ. After sermon in a cathedral, by some of their most eloquent preachers, titled ladies have carried the plates for the collection for infant schools. Sisters of mercy, daughters of the cross, dames of the sacred heart, and of the bleeding heart, put forth their most zealous influence. They seem to have copied very faithfully from some of the more animated bodies of Protestants in this country and America. There is to be found among them a species of protracted revival meetings, of which the following description is given. "Several of their most eloquent preachers travel about the country on festival and other great days. Oftentimes they form what

they call *a Mission*. This Mission generally lasts from ten to fourteen days; during which period, there are four or five Jesuits, or Priests of some other order, who preach twice every day in the church; the remainder of the day, and often the night, is spent by these missionaries in hearing the people confess, and granting them absolutions and indulgences. On such occasions, there is almost a cessation from labour; the peasants flocking to the church and confessional because of peculiar privileges being then granted them. These missions are of frequent occurrence, especially in those villages where the Gospel is preached by a Protestant minister. The priests even visit the houses of persons who go to hear the Gospel preached, when promises and threats are not spared, in order to bring the wandering sheep home again."—They also abundantly avail themselves of the influence of the press, having besides a Book or Tract Society, "daily papers, and Monthly Magazines, in almost every town, all engaged in ardently pleading their cause." Even "lending libraries have been formed, to supply those who cannot afford to buy."—Of the success of their labours some estimate may be formed from the fact, that "since 1830, no fewer than two hundred and forty new monasteries have been opened."

Among the causes to which this revival of Popish zeal and enterprise in Belgium may be traced, next to that of the unquestionable revival of the body affecting all the members, this local one may be assigned—the exertions on the part of the Protestants to assail the system which is thus defended. Devoutly were it to

be wished, that the numbers and means of the assailants were in a proportion better fitted to justify the alarms of the assailed; for had we not to reflect on the small number of friends on whom the Reformation, and even christianity itself could count at first—and were not our hopes sustained by the power of Him who hath all power in heaven and on earth, who giveth power to the faint and increaseth strength to those who have no might, and who from the smallest and most unpromising beginnings can bring the most satisfactory and magnificent results, we might well ask in despondency, what can these feeble Christians do?—I shall now present a short view of the existing Protestantism of Belgium.

Of the number of Protestants in Belgium, I have no means of speaking with certainty; but, according to Mr. Panchaud, there are few *natives* of Protestant parents, the most being converts from the Roman Catholic Church. The remainder consists of immigrants into Belgium, from Holland, Germany, and Britain, either temporary residents, or who have settled in the country with a view to trade. It is said that from this country, no fewer than six thousand are to be found in Brussels and its vicinity alone; and that over all Belgium the number of British is very considerable. Mr. P. classes the Protestant church of Belgium under two heads—these supported by the government, and those supported by voluntary contributions; of the former, there are, first, eleven congregations having ten ministers denominated Synodal churches—and, next, seven congregations having seven

ministers of the Church of England persuasion. Of the first, he gives this account:—"they adopt the form and discipline of the Reformed and Dutch national churches; the Liturgy and Consistory of the former, with the Synod of the latter.* They are all independent one of another as to internal regulations; but the Synod, (consisting of the minister of each church, and one of the elders of its Consistory,) meets once a-year, to discuss the general laws and regulations of the body, to examine and admit candidates for the ministry, to induct them into vacant churches, and to agree to all demands to be addressed to the government. The direction of the business of the Synod during the year, is confided to a President, Vice-President, and Secretary chosen at the annual meeting." It is afflicting to have to add, that in a country in which the number of Protestants is so small, the condition of this Synodal church is so unsatisfactory. Indeed, in the words of M. Panchaud, "they have a form of godliness, but possess not the power." He reckons by a few units, the number of genuine converts among the members. He states that "the Consistory of Brussels passed a resolution, that it was incompatible for one of its number to be a member of the committee of a Bible Society—that the President and Secretary of the Synod lately protested to the government against the proselytising spirit of the Belgium Evangelical Society, denouncing them as compassing sea and land to make

* Two or three of the German Congregations have the Lutheran service.

one proselyte, and when he is made, making him tenfold more the child of hell than themselves,—that, however, two of the ministers of the Synod decidedly countenance the Missionaries of the Society—and that in one of its churches there is considerable spiritual life, in that of Paturages, consisting of persons who have left the Roman Catholic Church within the last ten or twelve years.”

The second class of Protestant churches, namely these supported by voluntary contribution, are, first, two English Episcopalian churches, one at Malines, and the other at Liege—next, two French churches, of which the one is supplied by a Mr. Boucher†—and the other in Brussels, by Mr. Panchaud. It is from this last named church chiefly that an important Society has arisen, to which I have already alluded, and of which, I must now give a short account, namely, *the Belgian Evangelical Society*. This is the only other Protestant interest in Belgium; and from which, we trust, as from a centre, the light of Divine truth may yet overspread this land of Popish darkness.

This evangelical church has its seat in Brussels, and consists of only about forty members, and from two to three hundred hearers. The Society in question was organized about four years ago. The way was in some measure prepared for its operations by a very extensive circulation of the Word of God, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, through the agency

† Mr. Boucher has recently removed to Bonn. I know not whether he has a successor in Brussels.

of *colporteurs*, or itinerant hawkers;—a species of agency of the value of which the Continental Societies of this country, and the Evangelical Societies on the Continent, are well aware. Upwards of eighty thousand copies of the Scriptures had by this means been put into circulation in Belgium, in spite of the hostility and denunciations of the Roman Catholic priesthood; a considerable amount of inquiry had been excited; and, there is reason to believe, saving conversions had, by the grace of God, in some cases been effected. In the year 1837, a very strong desire was felt by the friends of religion in Brussels to attempt something for God and their country, by means of evangelical labour; and by the pecuniary help of pious friends in England, three Belgian Evangelists were sent forth that year. The Evangelical Society of Belgium was quickly formed; and after experiencing considerable difficulties in the first years of its existence, from causes which it is unnecessary for me to specify, was re-constructed two years ago; and in principle, spirit, and operation, now appears a Scriptural instrument, prepared of God, for the great object it aims to accomplish. In principle, it is strictly evangelical, proclaiming a full and free salvation by the grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord; in spirit it is alike scripturally liberal, faithful, and devoted; while its operations combine preaching, school instruction, Tract and Bible distribution—in a word, the diversified and tried machinery employed by christian benevolence in our own times. The most distinguished fruits of the labours of the Society are converted Roman Catholics;

and among its agents already are no fewer than three Priests, who have become obedient to the faith. The following is the most recent summary of the labours and successes of this invaluable Institution ; and, did my limits permit, very moving notices might be selected, both respecting the missionary stations, and the schools of the Society.

“ During the five years of the Society’s existence, upwards of three hundred and six families have decidedly quitted the Roman Catholic church, and joined the congregations formed by its missionaries; two hundred of these persons give evidence of having received the Word as the power of God unto salvation, and now follow him as dear children. The Society has in all thirteen paid agents labouring to evangelize the country. The Gospel has been preached in more than thirty different places. Ten houses of prayer have been opened for the service of God. Five schools have been established, in which five hundred children have been taught to read the Word of God, and in which three hundred more are now being instructed in the sacred volume. Many thousands of adults have had their attention drawn to the truth by means of the tract *colporteurs*. . . . Most of the missionary stations are capable of being much extended, were the respective missionaries able to occupy a larger tract of country than they now do. Three or four new fields of labour earnestly demand as many missionaries ; it could immediately open two or three new schools, and very advantageously send forth two or three more tract *colporteurs* ; and all without seeking beyond the wants

already brought under its cognizance. The work is advancing so rapidly, and will shortly become so extensive, that the number of missionaries now employed will be found totally inadequate to the labour they will have on their hands. The constitution of the country, affording the Society the fullest liberty to develop its activity, the spirit of inquiry now abroad, the measure of light which has already broken in on a large number of Roman Catholics, and the abundant distribution of the Holy Scriptures carried on at the present moment by means of the several *Colporteurs* employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, are so many encouraging voices saying, ‘Go in and possess the land.’”

I cannot withhold the following information from the Report of the Society, published since what precedes was written.

“Only a few days since, in one of the largest churches in Brussels, a most splendid crown was presented to a ‘Miraculous image of the Virgin,’ invoked as the Mother of Mercy. It is stated that there were ninety ounces of pure gold in the crown, and the workmanship alone cost £280. The following is a description of the crown, as given in the *Journal de Bruxelles*, 31st May, 1843.

“ ‘The front of the cross which is on the orb, is ornamented with five superb sapphires; the one given by her majesty the queen of the Belgians, is placed in the middle; on the sides are four brilliants, four fine rubies, and forty-five rose diamonds. The back of the cross is the same as the front, with the exception of

the sapphires, for which peridots are substituted; in addition to these, the cross is enriched by thirty-three fine pearls. The arches are of gothic form and studded with forty diamonds and forty-eight vermeilles; enamelled ivy branches climb the sides of the arches and meet at the top. The band which encircles the orb, and that which crosses its upper hemisphere, are of sky-blue enamel and are adorned with twelve diamonds and four rubies. The fleurons are embellished with sixteen fine hyacinths and other precious stones. The cap has four beautiful gothic ornaments, with four fine Siberian amethysts and two hundred and eighty-four diamonds. Between each of these ornaments, there is an inscription in sky-blue enamelled letters, *Marice Matri Misericordice*. The crown is lined with gothic lace of golden filligree work, intermixed with rubies, diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, turquoises, and three hundred and forty-four pearls. The total number of precious stones in the crown is five hundred and ninety-three, and of fine pearls three hundred and seventy-seven. What in the eye of faith infinitely augments the value of these precious stones is, that they are the gifts of the middle classes, who have imitated the zeal of the poor. (The subscription to buy the crown was begun by the poor.)

“The circle of the diadem bears an inscription, *Marice Matri Misericordice*, in azure letters, because Mary is queen of heaven by the almighty power of God. The emblems are taken from different royal and imperial crowns, to show that Mary's crown includes and far surpasses them all. On the top of

the four arches, (after the royal crown,) is an orb surmounted by the sign of Redemption, because the mother of the Saviour reigns by this sign of salvation.'

- "As may be supposed, the ceremony of crowning the image was one of great pomp. The Journal de Bruxelles gives the following account of it:

"The evening before ascension-day, all that part of the High-Street which reaches from the church to the parsonage house, was planted with firs, on which were hung garlands of evergreens, and red, blue, and white calico. Several triumphal arches were also placed in the streets. Early in the morning an immense crowd gathered around the church. At six o'clock the cardinal-archbishop celebrated the mass, and during two hours administered the communion.

"The confessors had been engaged till midnight in hearing the confessions of the people. At eight o'clock, the archbishop of Damietta, nuncio at Brussels, celebrated mass and then continued to give the communion; in an adjoining chapel, the holy eucharist had been distributed from five o'clock in the morning. Several hundreds of persons, seeing the difficulty of approaching the holy table, went to other churches to satisfy their devotion. There were three thousand communicants at the chapel alone (the church in which the ceremony took place). At ten o'clock the Rector Magnifique of the Louvain Catholic University chanted high mass, at which the cardinal was present in his pontifical dress, surrounded by his grand vicar, several canons, and a great number of the clergy.

"At two o'clock the procession quitted the par-

sonage-house for the church, headed and closed by a detachment of the guides, (the king's body-guard), their music in front.

“ ‘The procession was formed by a deputation of the different brotherhoods of the parish—the Council of Administration of the Church—the Community of the Brethren of Christian Schools—the Fathers of the Company of Jesus and of the Congregation of Redemptorists—the Curé of the Parish and a numerous Clergy—the Cardinal-Archbishop and his Vicar-General—the Rector Magnifique of the University of Louvain and several Canons.

“ ‘More than three hundred men of the different regiments in town, were drawn up in line to keep order.

“ ‘The crown was borne by eight young ladies dressed in white, accompanied by others carrying flowers and laurels. When they reached the church, it was placed on a rich pedestal at the feet of Mary.

“ ‘In the morning, the curé of the church was informed, that the king had decided on accompanying her majesty the queen, and bringing with him his royal highness the duke of Brabant. At three o'clock the royal suite arrived; their majesties were accompanied by the countess Merode, &c. &c. (here follow the names of their majesties' suite).

At the entrance of the church, the cardinal-archbishop, at the head of his clergy, complimented the king on his following the example of his august consort in honouring the grand solemnity with his presence.

“ ‘The cardinal began the *Veni Creator*, which was executed by a full orchestre. The Rev. Father

Boone addressed the assembly in a short and touching discourse, proving in a few words, that the crown offered to Mary, was a crown of glory for her, and a crown of joy for the people. The cardinal then blessed the crown, after which the imposing ceremony of the coronation took place. Preceded by two priests who carried the precious treasure, the cardinal ascended the steps which were raised before the throne of Mary, and when the crown, proof of so much affection and of so many good works and conversions, was placed on the head of the mother of mercy, the eyes of all the assembly were fixed on this good mother, and expressed a feeling of the purest joy and most filial attachment; no pen can describe that moment of enthusiasm. The music of the guides, which had played during the ceremony, now ceased, and that of the college executed a hymn. The cardinal then consecrated to Mary, the king, the queen, their august children, the parish, the capital, and the whole of Belgium; and began the *Magnificat*, which, chanted by a numerous clergy, constrained every heart to the deepest devotion. The affecting ceremony being ended, the cardinal went to the high altar and gave the triple blessing with the holy sacrament, and then conducted their majesties to the church door. It is impossible for us to describe the enthusiasm of the people, when the royal family entered and quitted the church. Long live the King! Long live the Queen! Long live the Duke of Brabant! were repeated by more than thirty thousand tongues. We are happy to see that it is to honour Mary, the Duke of Brabant appears for the first time publicly in

a church. In the evening there was an illumination in the streets through which the procession had passed, and also in different parts of the parish; the poor places vied with the rich in the number of lights. It was impossible for the people to be happier than they were at seeing the royal family, the nobility, and the high clergy, associate with them in a festival which they had begun in such an interesting manner, and which, in establishing their religious principles, has given them a lesson of such high morality.'

"We will make no comments on the ceremony; it will speak to the hearts of all those who have been taught of God more powerfully than we can do. We will only remark, that the *golden-crowned* Virgin held on her arm an image of Christ *as a child*, on whose head was a *small silver* crown; we heard of no offering being made to the child.

"We will turn from such a distressing subject to one which will give pleasure to the christian, and call forth his prayers and praise.

"Most of our missionary stations could be much extended, were the respective missionaries capable of occupying a larger tract of country than they now do, or were it prudent for the Society, in the present state of its funds, to send additional labourers to aid those already so actively and successfully employed. Three or four new fields of evangelization earnestly demand as many missionaries; two or three new schools could be immediately opened, and more tract *colporteurs* employed, without seeking beyond the wants already brought under our cognizance. The work is advancing

so rapidly, and will shortly become so extensive, that the number of missionaries now employed will be totally inadequate.

“The constitution of the country affording the Society the fullest liberty to develop its activity, the spirit of inquiry now abroad, the measure of light which has already broken in on the minds of a large number of Roman Catholics, and the abundant distribution of the Holy Scriptures carried on at the present moment by means of the several *colporteurs* employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, are so many encouraging voices saying, ‘Go in and possess the land.’

“The paucity of persons in Belgium able to help the work is a very serious difficulty. Not many of the Protestants are zealous for the cause of Christ, and still fewer are able to aid by their purse. Most of the converts from the Roman Catholic church, on their coming out from that body, sacrifice the friendship of their families and the occupations by which they gained their living.

“However, we mention with pleasure, that the subscriptions received in this country in 1842, exceed by £55 those of 1841, showing that a growing interest in the spiritual welfare of their fellow-countrymen is being taken by those who were once in Roman Catholic bondage.

“Dear friends, we now appeal to your christian benevolence; it will require at least £1,300 to meet the expenses of the current year, and the receipts up to the present time only amount to £350. In about a

month £250 to £300 will be required to pay the salaries of the labourers and rents due. The Treasurer has only £36 in hands.

“ We beseech you by the love of Christ to ‘ come up to our help,’ in the evangelization of Belgium; we beseech you in the name of those ‘ little flocks’ gathered around the true Shepherd, by the preaching of the Gospel. Can we leave without pastors, chapels and schools, those few ‘ little ones’ who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? They can expect no help from the world, and many of them have to suffer loss for righteousness’ sake. It is to the ‘ poor’ that the Gospel is preached in this country; be not surprised then, that we appeal to you in their behalf. Yes, we are convinced you will understand their wants, sympathise with them in their difficulties, rejoice to help them, and follow your gifts with your prayers, that the Lord will continue to accompany the preaching of his Holy Word with his blessing, so that those who sow and those who reap may rejoice together with an everlasting joy—a joy full of glory.”

These statements, which it were easy to enlarge, and which, by being enlarged, would be more effective, have established, I feel persuaded, a strong case in behalf of Belgium, whose condition is little known, and, I fear, less regarded by British Christians. But on the strength of the important facts now stated, may I not ask, whether there does not proceed from Belgium to Britain a voice as distinct and as imperative, as if uttered from heaven, “ Come over to us and help us?”

Belgium is near us. It is in the strict sense our neighbour; and if her spiritual desolation does not move our

hearts, where is our homage to the second great commandment of the Divine law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?" By the facilities for travel with which Divine Providence now supplies us, this necessitous, this inviting region, adjoins our own shores. Belgium may be reached as easily as Ireland.

Missionary labour is cheap in Belgium. Whereas in the East or West Indies, after we have sent out our Missionary at the necessary cost of outfit and passage, nearly three hundred pounds are needed annually for his comfortable support, in Belgium eighty pounds will suffice; and twenty pounds additional will be sufficient to rent a temporary place of worship. Not that the mere cheapness of missionary labour should decide our choice of the missionary field; much less that when the fitness of the field is satisfactorily indicated, we should grudge the expense of its cultivation, which the enlightened Christian will ever regard, as, in the first instance, an offering of gratitude to Him to whom we owe all that we are, possess, or hope for, and who, "though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." But in the difficulty confessedly existing, arising chiefly from culpable causes on the part of the churches of Christ, of finding pecuniary means sufficiently ample to meet the demands of the world, christian economy, which ever combines wisdom with liberality in its distributions from the treasury of the Lord, will not be insensible to the importance of the comparison, that in Belgium three labourers may be as comfortably maintained as one can be on more remote fields of usefulness.

Belgium has special claims at this moment. So

many are the openings, and so urgent the calls for preachers and schoolmasters, that the Evangelical Society know not what to do to have them supplied. The most ample liberty for all their operations is still secured by the law. The hostility and the vigilance of the Roman Catholic clergy, their untiring efforts to blast the Protestant interest, and the manifest hazard of their perverting the influence of a liberal government, suggest the duty of doing what our hands find to do with our might, and rendering our aid powerful by making it prompt.

The exigencies of our own countrymen, living in such numbers in Brussels alone, a city as noted as Paris itself for its gaiety and irreligion, and converting the Lord's day into a day of pastime and dissipation, loudly demand an active sympathy. How important to employ the best means for their protection from the snares with which they are surrounded in that land; by opening their eyes to their own spiritual condition, to inspire them with compassion for that of others; and to bring our English and Scottish brethren from being the victims and the promoters of Belgic vice, to become the moral benefactors of the people.

Yes, many of our countrymen visit, and have visited Belgium. Many have gone for pleasure; happy were our visitors animated with purer and more exalted objects. Many have gone for gain; is it not fit that some should be sent rather to give than to receive, to impart to their poor brethren in that region the best treasure which man can impart to man? Long have British soldiers trodden the Belgic territory, displaying their characteristic skill and

courage, storming her strongest fortresses, strewing her fields with the slain, and gathering such laurels as warriors rejoice to wear. O for the time when Belgium shall know Britain by other tokens of her influence than these, by the presence and labours of the servants of the Prince of Peace, the Captain of our salvation; till the day come, as come it shall, when all her ancient fortresses shall, like our own, be dismantled, when conflicting hosts shall no more stain her soil with blood, when the thunder of war shall no more alarm or scatter her people, and throw her towns in ruins, when they shall beat the sword into the plough-share, and the spear into the pruning hook! The most fertile fields of Belgium shall then afford but a faint emblem of the spiritual harvest with which she shall be enriched in all her borders; when her land shall yield its increase, and God, even her own God, shall bless her.

Surely the long past experience of Belgium pleads tenderly, and yet resistlessly in its behalf. Who can reflect without the deepest emotion on the wrongs of Belgium three centuries ago? Who would not wish now to bring to her some compensation for her ancient sufferings, to restore the long lost privileges, which the hand of the spoiler took away—to replace and burnish again her golden candlesticks, to supply the oil that has been so long wanting, and to rekindle the holy light which for ages has been almost extinguished? Who would not desire to be instrumental in building up in that land “the tabernacle of David which has fallen down; in building again the ruins thereof”—to obey, as he can, the prophetic call, “go through, go through

the gates, prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high-way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh: behold his reward is with him, and his works before him." It is impossible to peruse the most pathetic and sorrowful of the ancient Psalms, without observing an exact counterpart in the doleful lot of Belgium. Do we not imagine we hear some heart-broken successor of the Belgic martyrs pour forth such strains as these, into the ears of God, and of his people? "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps, the dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them . . . How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?" O let us hasten to the relief, to the solace, of these mourners; and soon may God, by our means, put off their sackcloth, and gird them with gladness; and the most joyful strains that ever ascended from Judah's land, from Zion hill, may soon be heard on the plains of Belgium! "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

CHAPTER VII.

FACTS AND OPINIONS IN GENEVA AND ITS VICINITY, RESPECTING THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

IN Geneva, as elsewhere, two distinct questions are presented for examination respecting the mutual relations of the Church and the State. The one is to this effect: Is it fit that in any circumstances whatever, an alliance should exist betwixt these two parties? The second is to this effect:—Existing circumstances being considered, what is the relative position which it becomes these parties to occupy?

The former of these is an abstract and independent question of duty, applicable to all places and times; and the inquiry is, whether, from the nature of the christian religion, and from the revealed will of its Divine Author, it appears that the christian church is ever at liberty to form an alliance with the secular powers? The latter rather relates to the voice of an enlightened expediency, wisely regarding the relative circumstances of the Church and the State as presently existing, and is an inquiry of this sort:—The question of abstract

duty being kept in abeyance, does the existing state of things demand or forbid the alliance of the church with the secular power?

It is plain enough that these are distinct questions. We can conceive one holding in the abstract, that the christian Church is at liberty to accept the protection and support of the State, and that the State is under obligation to afford protection and support to the Church; but that such is the existing character of the State, such its obvious views and demands, in the protection and support which it proffers or confers, that the Church cannot, dare not, fulfil the conditions with which the boon is connected, and ought to forego state favour, to maintain inviolate her allegiance to her Divine Head. We need not go beyond our own country to find an example sufficiently large and distinct to render the difference palpable to any mind.

In regard to these inquiries, however, two remarks are naturally suggested. If the first be settled in the negative, no room is left for the second. Should it appear that Christianity, from its spiritual nature, repels alliance with the secular power, or, that its Author has sufficiently indicated his will in opposition to such alliance, then the temporary question of expediency is superseded.—On the other hand, the question of expediency naturally enough leads to the question of right; the inquiry, What ought we to do in present circumstances? to the prior and paramount inquiry, What ought to be done in all circumstances? A question of mere expediency is often perplexed, and requires to be decided on grounds not sufficiently perceptible and solid

to give satisfaction and establishment to the mind. So that from the very difficulty with which the discussion of the second inquiry is often confessedly attended, and the unsatisfactory results to which it leads, the thoughtful and conscientious inquirer is naturally thrown back to the first named question, and seeks that rest in the solution of the one, which he finds it so difficult to arrive at in that of the other.

The order in which these questions have often been investigated, has, nevertheless, been the inverse of that which I have observed in naming them. Some strong cases have occurred in point of fact, rendering the solution of the question of expediency (notwithstanding the embarrassment with which it is generally attended) simple and urgent, so that separation from the State, or which amounts to the same thing, from the body that exclusively holds state alliance and favour, has been decidedly resorted to by the best informed friends of the truth and liberty of the Gospel, as the only expedient consistent with duty. Circumstances have so clearly defined and fenced the path, as, that without stopping or turning back, they have had no option but to obey, "the voice behind them saying, this is the way, walk ye in it." Examples in illustration of this fact are at hand in plenty. Few of the older Non-conformists of England separated from the English church on account of its alliance with the State, but solely because they could not enjoy in its communion that measure of evangelical truth, or of christian liberty, which their consciences demanded. The Scottish Dissenters, both old and new, have been in similar circum-

stances ; each of these parties having seceded from the established church, not, at least primarily, on account of its connexion with the State, but from the sacrifices of christian truth, independence, and freedom, which, they felt, their continuance in the Church, and their connexion with the State through the Church, would have extorted from them. The first refugees from this country, by whom the North American provinces were colonized, "the pilgrim fathers," were in circumstances precisely similar. These venerable men left their country and its church, not from any aversion to the union of the ecclesiastical with the civil power, but to escape from the oppression and persecution to which they were subjected, and the corruptions to which they were exposed. It has been remarked, that in this matter at least the church has often been put right in fact, before she has been put right in principle ; or rather, that she has been driven to the position she occupies by a happy necessity, which she ought ever to have occupied from regard to duty.

I shall, then, begin with the second of these questions as it affects Geneva and its vicinity, and shall adduce some of those facts by which many Christians in these parts have been carried to the conclusion, that in existing circumstances the church and the state ought to be dissevered, and to the important step of actual separation.

I have already detailed the circumstances of the case of Dr. Malan. He was excluded, we have seen, from the exercise of his functions as a Minister of the Gospel in the Genevan church, he was deprived of office in

the College, because, in opposition to the Unitarianism of the church, he taught the doctrines of evangelical christianity. The church was not the only oppressor in this important case; the State, the ally of the Church, granted and confirmed what the church invoked. Independently of the abstract question, whether the church and state should be connected by alliance; whether the state is bound, or is forbidden, to superintend the doctrine and discipline of the Church, and to support by her money her pastors and institutions, it became clear to Dr. Malan, and to those who followed him, where the path of duty lay; that in the circumstances in which Divine Providence had placed them, they could no longer retain State connexion and support, except at the too costly price of sacrificing fidelity to their consciences, to the truth, and to its Author. To retain State favour, they must bow to State control; to refuse the latter, they must forego the former. Their circumstances dictated their duty.

The case of Dr. Gaussen and his friends was precisely similar. Dr. Gaussen, we have seen, resolved to employ the Scriptures as his text-book, in preference to the Unitarian Catechism; and he honestly declared the reasons of his preference. The Church demanded that he should use their Catechism, and withdraw the letters, in which he vindicates his practice. He refused obedience. He was excluded from his parish by an ecclesiastical sentence, which the civil authorities confirmed. Dr. Gaussen and his friends were thus shut up, not, indeed, to a formal secession from the Established Church, for to that point, I regret

to say, their light has not yet carried them, but to an entire withdrawment from State alliance and emolument, and to the adoption of a system of free and independent agency, in christian worship, theological instruction, and missionary enterprise, over which neither the Church nor the State have any control. The religious bodies with which they are associated are, in point of fact, dissevered from the civil power.

In every view, the circumstances in which these good men find themselves placed, satisfy their judgment as to the duty, *de facto*, of a separation from the State. Let us advert more fully to some of these circumstances.

The first of these is found in *the character of the Genevese Government*. Many good men among ourselves, as in other countries, who hold in theory what is denominated *the Establishment principle*, seriously demur to the practical application of this principle in the formation of an alliance betwixt a christian Church and an unchristian State. Assume that the State is christian, and, in the judgment of such men, the Church may enter, and ought to enter, on proper terms, into an alliance with it. In their opinion, no cause exists to forbid the bans. By the old theory of Geneva, the members of the State and of the Church were the same individuals; and the principle of State alliance being assumed, nothing in such a case existed to prevent the carrying of the principle into practice. For by this theory, a christian church allies itself with a friendly and safe partner, with a christian State. But the character of the State being altered, the State, that is to say, being composed of unchristian

men—of men whose creed, if creed they have—whose principles, if they have any, are adverse to the truth as it is in Jesus—the expediency of the alliance is then reversed. The law of Christ which prohibits the christian individual, seems equally to prohibit any associated number of such individuals, from being “unequally yoked together with unbelievers;” and all the dangers connected with such an alliance, all the evils which must certainly result from it, are chargeable on the formation of the interdicted alliance itself. What, then, is the character of the Genevese Government? In ordinary *parlance*, they may be, and probably are, highly respectable and honourable men; but, scripturally speaking, they are not such as to form fit allies for a christian Church. We have seen the character of the ecclesiastical authorities of Geneva, and what measures they have taken against the truth and its friends. But the civil rulers coincide with the ecclesiastical. The opinions and the decisions of Unitarian ecclesiastics are recognised and confirmed by a Unitarian government. As is the Church, so is the State of Geneva; it is “like priest like people.” Irrespective, then, of the truth or falsehood of the Establishment principle, can we wonder if good men in Geneva shrink from all practical alliance betwixt a christian Church and such a Government?

But still farther, *even the popular constitution of Geneva* rather augments than diminishes the perils of an alliance betwixt the Church and the State. We have seen that the Government of Geneva is a pure democracy, the suffrage being universal, and the majo-

rity of the people being thus necessarily represented by the Government. But what is the character of the great body of the Genevese? They are intelligent, generally speaking, and, as compared with the aggregate of the population of other European countries—that is admitted. Upon the whole, they are an educated people, in the usual sense of that term; but as a body, are they scripturally enlightened on the great subject of religious truth, and do they feel and display its power? First, nearly one-half of the population is Popish. Next, the great proportion of the nominally Protestant seem sufficiently satisfied with the state of things in the Established Church. But, besides, indifference to all religion, except as to the occasional observance of its exterior forms, appears to be too prevalent among the professedly Protestant population. The following are the words of D'Aubigné:—"In the opinion of all, infidelity has made great progress among our people. The friends of order, who, during several weeks have been in the most intimate contact with our whole population . . . have been alarmed with all that they have heard, both on the subject of religion, and on the subject of morality."* Can it be fit to place the church of Christ in alliance with such a people—in alliance with a government which must be the organ, the true expressson, the very image of such a people? Can it be safe to place the ark in the hands of the enemy? It is to no purpose to remark that the Genevese are too sincerely and

* La Question de l'Eglise. (1841.) p. 110.

ardently in love with liberty to oppress the church of Christ? The church may be corrupted by impure influence, even when she is not trodden down by power; and what can more surely effect her corruption than her alliance with that which is corrupt? But even the love of political liberty, however strong, in a State with which the Church forms an alliance in order to secure support, will not ensure her against oppression. For that which is given something will be expected and demanded in return, and the Church must either consent to give that which is sought, or renounce the pay and the compact on which the expectation and demand are founded. An irreligious state will not relish a religious creed, unless assent to it be no better than a form; it will not permit a scriptural discipline to be applied to its members, and the Church must either relax its rigour to suit its ally, or renounce the alliance. Were it necessary to get lessons in any other place than Geneva, in the Canton Vaud the Genevese are well taught what a free but irreligious State will demand of a dependent Church. In that Canton political liberty is as entire and universal as it is in Geneva, or as it can exist on earth; but there the free Swiss hold their Church in chains, dictating what she shall teach, and what she shall not teach—throwing the doors of her communion wide open to all whom the State chooses to admit, to all, indeed, who choose to enter, and subjecting ecclesiastical causes to its own control, as if they were civil suits. Good men are fast learning in these lands that the caprices of popular liberty associated with power, may prove as hostile to

the Church as the stern mandates of solitary despotism, and that the church can be safe only when she is alike exempt from both.

The hazards to religious liberty, even under the free constitution of Geneva, will appear from this, that no public instruction of any sort can take place *without the authority of the Council of State*. The following are the provisions of the Constitution (1841). “*Article 9.—Liberty of instruction is guaranteed to all Genevese, under the reserve of dispositions prescribed by the laws for the interests of public order and good manners. Strangers cannot teach but after having obtained the authority of the Council of State. Article 10.—No corporation, or congregation, can be established without the authority of the Council of State. This authority is always revocable.*” Precarious securities, truly, for religious liberty at all times, and abundantly slender after Roman Catholics shall have become a majority of the population!

But, probably, the chief circumstance which presses on the minds of the friends of the Reformation in Geneva and its vicinity, urging the present inexpediency of a Church Establishment, is found in *the alarming spirit and advances of Popery*. I have already had occasion to allude to the fresh zeal which is every where apparent in the church of Rome, and to the varied and untiring efforts which her clergy, and all whom they can by any means influence, are making to regain the ground lost at the Reformation, and to extend in all quarters the Romish faith. I have adverted in the last chapter particularly to the renewed energy of the

priests and Catholic laity in Belgium. Over all France the same spirit is not less active and aspiring; indeed, the recent and continued movements of the French Catholics to recover that ascendancy over the popular mind, of which the Revolution and a wide-spread infidelity had nearly deprived them, and to extend, partly from bigotry, partly from secular policy, the sway of Rome, almost exceeds belief. Even in Sardinia, where Popish domination over prince and people seems as perfect as it could have been three centuries ago, and where so little Protestant stimulus has ever been permitted to disturb the national torpor, even in this country, that brisk pulse which now beats in every member of the Popish body is beginning to be felt. By orders, or by inclination, the priesthood is on the alert, every avenue by which religious information might be suspected to enter, either by preaching or the press, is jealously guarded, and all attempts to evade the vigilance, and to disregard the commands of civil or ecclesiastical superiors, are met by punishment not less prompt than severe. Scarcely three years ago, a minister of the Gospel, belonging to the Canton Vaud, who had gone in quest of health to a watering place within the Sardinian frontier, became a victim to the intolerance of the Popish clergy. He had brought along with him some religious tracts, but aware of the danger, had distributed none. Suspecting, however, that he might have such heretical publications in his possession, and eager to ensnare him by the distribution of some, a female servant in the hotel in which he lodged, by clerical instigation, requested some tracts from the

Protestant stranger, who incautiously gave her one or more. He was instantly pounced upon ; was dragged before a Sardinian tribunal ; charged with the crime of circulating heretical books ; was actually condemned as guilty, and sentenced to pay a fine of 1500 francs, and to be imprisoned for two years. In point of fact the fine was paid, and he was shut up among felons in a common Sardinian jail for nine months, at the end of which period he was liberated on the request of the Catholic bishop, whose diocese includes the Canton Vaud. I might multiply facts well known in Switzerland as to the existing spirit of Sardinia.—But the danger of Geneva from Popery does not arise only from this, that she has Savoy menacing on the one side, and France intriguing on the other ; the same aggressive spirit stirs within the Swiss confederation itself. Of the twenty-two Cantons nine are Popish, and in several others, six I believe, the established religion is *mixed*, that is, Popery is legalized as well as Protestantism ; and the zeal of Catholic Switzerland, although modified by the institutions of the country in its expressions, is not less warm than that of their brethren in Sardinia or France. Even in the Cantons that are strictly Protestant, there are to be found considerable bodies of Catholics, who are yearly augmenting in number and influence. But in the Genevese territory itself, the progress of Popery is rapid beyond all precedent. For a long period subsequent to the Reformation, there could have been few, if any, resident Catholics within the territory. A great and rapid change has recently taken place. During the long occupation of Geneva

by the French, that is from 1798 to 1814, both infidel and Popish influence made alarming progress. In the latter year, a small additional territory was annexed by treaty, to Geneva, and being taken from Savoy, the population was entirely Catholic. It was at this period that the Roman Catholic religion was placed on the support of the State, equally with the Protestant. From that time, the activity of the Popish clergy and their party has been unremitting; and by the formation of schools, by domiciliary visitation, by public processions, by preaching, by the press, they are straining every nerve to reduce long rebellious Geneva to her abjured allegiance to the See of Rome. Far from attempting to conceal their efforts, their object, and their confident expectations, they glory in avowing them; they already exult in their anticipated success; and with too large a proportion of such a population as they have to do with, confidence is regarded as the *prestige* of victory. It is not long since the Popish party modestly requested that the chief church in Geneva, Calvin's church, the cathedral itself, should be restored to them! Except when the *eclat* of a communion attracts a throng of Unitarian formalists, the cathedral, we have seen, is nearly empty at the usual worship of the Sabbath; and the cold of winter is such an overmatch for Unitarian ardour, that during that season they surrender their cathedral, without a sigh, to the undisturbed possession of the fogs and the frosts, inviting the few worshippers who are not quite benumbed, to assemble in a small and more comfortable place adjoining. The Roman Catholics sought the

restoration of a place of worship for which the Protestants appear to have so little need, accompanying the request with the sarcastic intimation, that they would keep the cathedral open all the year round, and that their numbers would keep it warm enough even during the winter's cold. The clergy, it is said, avow their conviction, that the question of occupancy is but a question of time; that there is no doubt that Geneva will soon be their own again; and remark with good humour, that the protestant motto will require no change, and will soon be fulfilled in another sense than that in which its Authors meant it—" *after darkness, light !*" The progress of the Popish population completes the danger. By the annexation of the new territory, and also by a perpetual immigration of poor Savoyards in quest of the comforts of Geneva, (like Hibernian immigration into Britain) the Roman Catholics have now upwards of twenty-seven thousand, out of a population rather under sixty thousand; and during the last five years, the Catholic population increased by three thousand, while that of the Protestants diminished by two hundred, the former by immigration into the territory, the latter by emigration from it. That advancing minority will become, and, probably, will soon become, an actual majority; and then, suffrage being universal, Geneva may, by the vote of a majority of her citizens, lose her rank among Protestant States, renounce by open profession the Protestantism which in fact her ministers and her people have already betrayed, and re-annex herself to Rome! Is it wonderful that in a position so humiliating, so afflictive, so

alarming, men of piety and forethought among the Genevese should project and urge a speedy and effectual severance of the Church from the State? Indeed, what is the alternative which must present itself to their minds? On the one side, they have Unitarianism established already, and Catholicism virtually established along with it, with the near prospect of its arriving at an ascendancy, possibly an exclusive ascendancy. On the other hand, they have the withdrawment of State support from both these systems, with the anticipation that they shall thus prevent the ultimate domination of the latter. Can they hesitate which side of the alternative to prefer? The real cause of solicitude is not found in the measure proposed, but in their power to carry it, and in the hazard that the crisis shall have arrived ere the antidote has been provided.

I leave this first part of the subject by showing in what light these things are viewed by Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, simply premising that, in the passages which I quote, he does not express his own sentiments only, but, as will appear from what follows, those of many others around him. "Protestantism," he says, "is now weakened and broken. The cement of the building is separated, and the edifice cracks in all its parts. Roman Catholicism, on the contrary, advances against it, armed at all points, and as if about to gain her last victory. . . . The faith of our fathers made Rome tremble at the name of Geneva; now, alas! Geneva trembles at the name of Rome. . . . Are we sure that Popery, triumphant, and perched upon our high towers, will not one day, and quickly, mock with bitter

derision the blindness of our citizens? The air is heavy, the atmosphere is choking, the night, perhaps the tempest, approaches. Let us enter then into our bosoms—let us reflect in that inner temple, and raising our cry to heaven, let us say, O God, save the country, for men come to destroy it.” I add only this other impassioned paragraph:—“Rome cannot change. All around us she advances. She builds altar after altar upon the banks of our lake. The progress is such among us, from the facility which strangers have in acquiring the rights of citizenship, that quickly (every one acknowledges it) the Romish population will exceed the Protestant population of Geneva. . . . Let Rome triumph at Rome; it is natural. Let Rome, as she assures herself, triumph at Oxford; the conquest will be great. But let Rome triumph at Geneva; then she will raise a cry that will echo to the extremity of the universe. Genevese! that cry will announce to the world the death of your country.” To prevent a catastrophe so deplorable, he proposes that, next to the return of the citizens to the lost faith of the Reformation, “the Reformed church shall be declared independent of the State.” *

The precise amount of this “independence,” as expounded by Dr. D’A. himself, will appear in the next chapter. It may suffice to remark here, that he does not complain of pensioning Catholics while Protestants are pensioned; he does not propose additional legal defences for Protestant ascendancy, to protect it

* *La Question de l’Eglise*, pp. 21, 28, 146, 147, 148.

against the coming hazard of Catholic ascendancy. He is too just and too wise a man not to perceive the force of the maxim, *pay none, or pay all*. Far from his sympathy are the selfish and arrogant claims of those who demand for themselves exclusively ascendancy and pay. He does not assign it to the State as its function to arbitrate betwixt the claims of rival sects to its favour, to lift one up, and to keep the others down. Religious equality in the eye of the law is his proposal; an equality arising, not from the granting to all alike, but from the denying to all alike, legal support and establishment, and leaving all parties equally to the duty of self-support, by their own honest and independent exertions.

CHAPTER VIII.

FACTS AND OPINIONS, &C., CONTINUED.

I HOPE I have said enough in the preceding chapter to show by what means God has been preparing the minds of his people for a separation, *de facto*, of the Church from the State, in Geneva and its vicinity. They cannot approve of a sanction being given by law to the cause of error. They cannot persuade themselves that the secular power possesses that character which would justify the ecclesiastical in venturing on its alliance. They cannot remain indifferent to the peril which threatens Protestantism, from an ambitious and antichristian church getting possession of the wealth and power of the State. As things are, then, a separation from the State seems the only, the imperative dictate of expediency, safety, and duty.

But this question of *fact* suggests the higher question of *right*; these evils arising from the union of the secular power with the ecclesiastical in *present circumstances*, unavoidably throws back the mind on the

present inquiry, is such a union lawful *in any circumstances*; and ought the separation to be permanent and universal? I mean to show that this question, so important in itself, and possessing such peculiar interest in these times, and in our own land, has not been overlooked in Geneva and its neighbourhood. I shall adduce evidence to show that the most powerful, the most accomplished, the most devotional men who adorn these churches, have been versant with this momentous inquiry, and have not only arrived at conclusions hostile to the lawfulness of the union of Church and State, in any circumstances, but have, with intrepid honesty and great earnestness, avowed their convictions. I refer particularly to four distinguished men, not assuredly all of equal eminence, but all of them standing so high in the just estimation of the Cantons in which they reside, as that, had the great question no other local friends than these, it would have in them a noble host in its favour. I refer to Doctors Merle D'Aubigné and Gaussen, in Geneva, and to Messrs. Vinet and Burnier in the Canton Vaud. Not that these eminent persons stand alone. In regard to the two latter, it will appear that they have friends not a few in their native Canton, as well as elsewhere; and the former are far from solitary in their opinions in Geneva. I am not aware that Dr. Malan has written on the subject, but in my own hearing he has spoken with clearness and decision on that side; and I presume that in this case, as in others, the flock share the opinions of the pastor. I believe the pastors of the Pelisserie hold the same sentiments, nor have I ever heard that their church

and they are at variance on this head. And I know that none can be more decided and zealous, on religious as well as political grounds, in favour of the sentiments of which I shall now treat, than some of the most influential laymen connected with the *Oratoire*.

Before proceeding to give some extracts, which, whether we regard the authors, or the eloquence with which they are written, cannot fail, I persuade myself, to be gratifying to my readers, I may be allowed one remark on the spirit which these writings breathe. When I speak of their spirit, I refer particularly to these two characters, their gentleness, and their pure and exalted piety. It is not to be forgotten that these eminent persons have written in a season of great agitation and controversial excitement, when, in this country at least, in circumstances at all analagous, some degree of acerbity, some severity of diction, some excessive partizanship, some heat in defending or assailing "vested rights," some recklessness in the ascription of motives, and in the judgment of motives, would be anticipated, and placed to the account of poor human nature, in the midst of temptation, even with good, and wise men. It also deserves to be kept in mind, that all these men have been sufferers in the cause. Derisive and offensive epithets have been unscrupulously applied to them; they have been ejected from the pulpits which they once occupied, or interdicted from those which they might have held; and they have been familiar with various unmerited privations and oppressions. Yet in the writings of these men I have not discovered one trace of this infirmity

—of this “wrath of man, which worketh not the righteousness of God.” They write with faithfulness, for they are “faithful brethren;” they write with energy, they cannot write otherwise, they are men of energy, and the cause demands all the earnestness and vigour of their souls; their eloquent words burn, but with a flame which enlightens and warms, without consuming aught save the errors against which it is directed. Were they solitary recluses, students only, who had never mingled in national or ecclesiastical affairs, and who had spent their days in the retirement of the closet, they could not have managed their masterly pens more gently and innocuously than they have been honoured to manage them. Never even at random, never even in haste, much less to gratify any tendency to humour or wit, have they dipt their pens in gall. How happy, had this spirit of these Swiss and Genevese controversialists inspired the writers and orators of our own country. But if I speak thus of their gentleness, in what terms does it become me to speak of their piety? They write like men whose reason is sanctified—who feel that their talents are the Lord’s—who never forget that “the Judge standeth at the door”—who are persuaded that the cause they plead is not their own, but his—and who know that they have the mind of Christ. With such manifestations of the pervading influence of piety, the tracts of D’Aubigné and of Gaussen, the papers of Burnier, (as far as I have examined the latter,) and, perhaps, I may say, above all, the treatise of Vinet are replete. Indeed I know not, if we except our greatest writer,

Milton, we shall readily find a burst of devotion more pure, more humble, and yet more lofty, more seraphic, I may almost call it, than that with which the last named writer concludes his volume. Again, may I not ask whether we have not cause to contrast, unfavourably for ourselves, the spirit of Switzerland with that of Britain?

In the following paragraphs I shall confine myself in a great measure to the tracts of D'Aubigne, and I do so the more readily, not only from the respect paid justly to his opinions in this country, but because it has been represented by not a few, from misinformation assuredly, that however decisive his sentiments are as to the duty of the church to renounce a secular alliance when the conditions or effects of its formation are inconsistent with her faithfulness or prosperity, he at the same time holds, that in other circumstances the alliance is defensible; in other words, that while he concedes the duty of separation from the State when circumstances demand it, he holds the Establishment principle. The following extracts will, I think, show that Dr. D'Aubigné is as hostile to the latter as he is friendly to the former.

On the general importance of ecclesiastical independence he has these words:—"What are the means of establishing liberty in the sphere of worship as in that of the State? First, to render the State and the Church independent the one of the other." *

But to what does independence amount in the estima-

* *La Question de l'Eglise*, p. 15.

tion of Dr. D'A.? Is it independence of the control of the State only? or of pay as well as control? It were strange if such a person should conceive it either practicable or proper, that these should be separated; that there should be a dependence for pay associated with an independence of control. Meanwhile, let us see what he includes in independence. "Should salaries for worship be at the charge of all the citizens? Let the citizens pay all for that by which all profit; but pay made by the State for religion is useless and therefore wrong." *

In what sense is it *wrong*? Is it inexpedient, unwise, only? or is it unjust also? On the subject of the *injustice* of civil establishments of religion, no writer in this country has expressed himself more strongly than Dr. D'A. in the following sentences: "Shall citizens pay for that by which they do not profit, for that which they reject perhaps, for that which they condemn? Is this, I ask, an *equitable* law? Has the State a *right* to call me, myself a Protestant citizen, to contribute to the Romish worship which I have abandoned? or myself a Roman Catholic citizen, to contribute to the Protestant worship, which I condemn? Are not the rights of conscience the first rights for the people?" Indeed the injustice and impiety of such exactions are dwelt upon by this writer in the warmest terms. After remarking on the manner in which they affect the various denominations in Geneva, some of whom, he shows, have three payments to make; first for their own pastors

* La Question de l'Eglise, p. 25.

from their own pockets; next from the ancient Genevese funds for the Company of Pastors; and finally, from the public contributions for the Roman Catholic priesthood: he adds, "And to speak of those citizens who do not believe We shall hope that their number is small; but there are, however, Genevese who cannot attach themselves to any of our creeds And *shall we oblige* these citizens to contribute to the preaching of these doctrines? Shall believers seek unbelievers to come to the support of their faith, to support, although they reject it? No, religion will not live except by voluntary offerings; she has a horror of such vexation, and she casts from her the responsibility with a feeling of the most energetic indignation." *

But suppose that the support of the State were withdrawn from the Church, and that henceforth her pastors and institutions were thrown on the contributions of her members alone, what would the result be? Propitious or adverse?—"If there be a religion which stands in need of the support of the State, be sure it is a false religion A church which cannot support herself, will show herself inferior to those free institutions, which, in our days, support themselves without foreign assistance. Societies which have for their object science, beneficence, pleasure, Bible Societies, those of missions, do not they find the necessary resources in the voluntary contributions of their members? And the christian society, that which blesses our marriages, which baptizes our children, which consoles our sorrows, shall it

* Quest. de l'Eglise, pp. 25, 26, 27. 28.

be unable to support itself? Of all countries of Europe, the Canton of Geneva is that which has least to fear from such an embarrassment. And the Roman Catholics themselves, let us not fear, will not remain, in point of generosity and attachment to their worship, behind the reformed Christians. From this new mode, there will result for the two churches inappreciable gain. Every one knows that the means of quickening the zeal of men for such and such an institution, is to interest them in it, and to make its very existence depend on each party. Very soon citizens indifferent to religion will interest themselves in institutions to which they themselves will contribute, and that interest will become to them a source of pleasure and of morality. Thus all the circumstances of the Republic plead in favour of the great cause of the independence of the Church and the State." * And afterwards, "I take upon me to say, it (the change from the compulsory to voluntary support) will prove a most happy circumstance for the reformed church Let the contributions be voluntary; they will be the expression of the price which each puts on the support of religion; they will then have a character of liberty which is not found in ordinary imposts, and they will strongly attach to the worship both individuals and families. In fine, we have ever seen, in all countries, when special funds were applied to such and such an end, they have ordinarily served to maintain abuse. We shall have, then, I think, nothing to lose, and much to gain, if

* Quest. de l'Eglise, pp. 31—34.

each believer is called to provide for the expense of his own worship, as he himself inclines." * In reference to poor churches in the country, he justly adds, "if the villages suffer, the town will come to their aid."

One great moral advantage which would diffuse itself among churches thus independent and free, and which cannot be over-estimated, from its influence on the value of religious profession, and on individual and public morality, is, in the judgment of Dr. D'Aubigné, *the sincerity* which it would stimulate. "They will profess," in such circumstances, he says, "that which they believe, in place of professing that which they believe not. Truth will succeed to appearance. But over all, and above all, in regard to religious belief, truth is first." And again, "The free manifestation of their convictions ought to succeed to a system of reserve and almost of mutism, which threatens to become the destructive trait of our people, and to attack profoundly their moral character." †

It would be easy to enrich these pages with extracts from this distinguished writer; but I am persuaded that those I have given will suffice to show, that on the great subjects of religious independence and freedom he is energetic and distinct; and that with all the influence so justly belonging to his talents, his learning, his genius, and his piety, he stands in the first rank among those illustrious foreigners who advocate in all its simplicity, and in all its entireness, the anti-establishment, the voluntary principle in religion. I can hardly

* Quest. de l'Eglise, pp. 127, 128. † Ib. pp. 130. 132.

help congratulating Dr. Merle D'Aubigné that his great work was so far in progress ere these tracts appeared, and that he has gained the ear and the affections of all parties in this country, before he opposed the views, shall I say, shocked the feelings, of one portion of them, by appearing on what they deem the wrong side. The man has been praised before he was fully known; and I doubt not will henceforth be considered as rather a doubtful and dangerous authority by not a few who heretofore have been accustomed very confidently to appeal to him.

Dr. Gaussen, the colleague of D'Aubigné, has not taken occasion, as far as I know, to express himself as strongly and fully in his writings, as his friend has done; but in a publication to which I have repeatedly referred, he has at least manifested his convictions with sufficient clearness. The passages which I quote are from a pamphlet which appeared twelve years ago, no sentiment in which, I believe, has been ever retracted or modified by the Author; and, indeed, since that period, the Swiss mind has neither been retrograde nor stationary, but has been steadily advancing, under fresh and augmenting influences, in the direction of religious liberty. "Do I mean entirely to reject the intervention of government in religious matters? I do not blame any one for holding this principle. I myself approve of it." And again, he represents an opponent of his reasoning as objecting to him:—"Do you mean to support the anti-scriptural principle of the union of the Church with the State? My answer is frank and easy. I will say, No; not in principle."*

* Lettres, par M. Gaussen.

Dr. Gaussen, then, harmonises in principle with his friend Dr. D'Aubigné.

I shall now shortly introduce the reader to the other two Swiss writers to whom I have referred. The first is M. Vinet, Professor of Divinity in Lausanne, who, I believe, has left the communion of the national church on principle, and who confessedly occupies the chief place among the religious *literati* of his Canton. Without undervaluing the labours of any other man, I may take upon me to say, that he is probably the greatest living author on the subject of which his volume treats.* His work is profoundly logical, searching into the deepest principles of the subject, and appears to possess so much of the character of moral demonstration as to settle the question. The feeling with which he writes is as intense—as holy and devotional—as the intellect which he displays is masculine, severe, and pure. It resembles more the prose of Milton than any other work with which I am acquainted, although, perhaps, less copious and less poetically inspired. Without going too much into detail, I cannot attempt to give an abstract of his argument. Assuming, or rather proving, that every human being ought to possess religious convictions, and is under a divine obligation to avow these convictions, he demonstrates that, for the civil magistrate, for civil society acting by the magistrate, to interfere with religion, is to interfere with the duty divinely imposed on the individual, and

* An Essay on the Profession of Personal Religious Conviction, and upon the separation of Church and State, considered with reference to the fulfilment of that duty.

is, therefore, to oppose human law to the divine. In every form in which a religious establishment has existed, or can be conceived to exist, M. Vinet labours to show its opposition to the will of God. Nor is there any conceivable objection to his demonstration left unexamined and undisposed of. I have not read the work in the original, but only in its English translation; and I earnestly wish that our version of it may have a wide and rapid circulation. I must content myself with presenting a brief, and not the most favourable specimen, of this great work to my readers.

“No one assuredly will pretend to say, that the duty of the individual being to declare his faith, the duty of society can possibly be to prohibit such declaration. To maintain such a position, we must infer that society and the individual were not conceived by the same mind nor with the same design; that society and the individual are two distinct creations, totally destitute of mutual relations, whom a ridiculous chance has forced to dwell together, and that God, not being the author of one of the two, must of necessity be the author of neither, since his wisdom would certainly have suited society to the individual, and the individual to society; but such a thought would be impious. Let us then set out with the contrary supposition, and let us say that right cannot be opposed to right, duty to duty, necessity to necessity; and that, if it be the duty of the individual to profess his faith, it must be the duty of society to respect that profession. The one truth implies the other. When we shall have demonstrated that the duty of society is to repress all

personal belief, and even to impose its own, we shall not be asked to prove farther, that the duty of the individual is to conceal his religion, or to accept one ready made from the hands of power; this would have been sufficiently shown. Let it be granted to us, then, in the present case, that our first demonstration renders the second superfluous.

“Society, or more strictly speaking, the State, which seems to have renounced the persecution of creeds, has not yet renounced their protection; and, perhaps, it will be expected, that having protested against persecution, we shall accept of protection with avidity. Yes, it is most true that we desire that the profession of religious convictions should be protected, but protected as the common right of all, and consequently without distinction of creeds. We are not desirous that any particular creed should be protected, nor in general, believers to the exclusion of unbelievers. We deprecate *protection*, for the same reason that we deprecate *persecution*. For the right of protection necessarily involves the right of persecution. Endeavours are made to limit this right; to prevent its exercise beyond the point where protection terminates; it may be forbidden to advance farther; but the limit is arbitrary, and it is impossible to conceive how, in sound logic, the State can be denied the right of persecution, after having been allowed that of protection. Yet the idea is a modern discovery. The times are not very remote, when the State, not indeed more reasonable, but certainly more logical than at present, arrogated to itself and exercised the right for which it now contends, in

virtue of a distinction altogether gratuitous. If anything be needed to prove that this distinction was not then recognised, it is the fact, that whenever the persecuted sects became the established religion of the country, they were not satisfied with being simply protected by the civil power, but they made use of the authority with which the State invested them, to banish or to oppress all who differed from them, to such an extent as to induce a philosopher of the last century to say, with more of asperity than irony, 'that religious liberty is only granting to every man the right of persecuting in his turn.' And how would the logic of facts contradict that of sentiment? Does not every privilege imply some exclusion? Can we put any honour upon some which will not be more or less an affront to others? And the faith which is not protected, is it not, by that very circumstance, persecuted, at least negatively? It follows, that for any religion whatever to accept protection, is to accept, as a consequence, the right of persecution.

"You tell us that you desire only protection; that you abhor persecution; but the distinction is idle. You condemn yourself to submit to it, and, what is worse, to make use of it. Yes, whatever the modesty of your pretensions, or the meekness of your disposition, rest assured you will persecute; every protected religion has ended by persecuting; nay, even when oppressed, even when trodden under foot, it has persecuted. It has received as the price of its own liberty, the power of trampling upon other liberties, which in their subjection could yet eclipse it. And in either case, whether

free or in subjection, it has never refused to persecute; it has ever been found that every protected religion has persecuted; it will not merely consent to persecution, it will claim it as a right, and the chief of its rights; it will regard it as the seal of its protection; and it will only consider itself efficiently protected, when it possesses the power to persecute. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* The more serious the religion, the more is it the result of conviction; the greater the importance attached by its followers to the knowledge and profession of its doctrines, the stronger will be the temptation. A religion whose motto is, 'no salvation out of my pale,' is likely to become violent and ferocious by the slightest contact with the civil power. The sword of the magistrate becomes drunken, according to the expression of the prophet; this sword becomes blind and furious in the hands of power. No law can regulate its use; its use is an abuse from the commencement, because it is an abuse in principle; and the only way to prevent religion from injuring both itself and humanity with this dangerous weapon is not to leave it for one single moment in her hands."*

The other writer to whom I have referred, is M. Burnier, who was a pastor in the Established Church of the Canton Vaud, but has withdrawn from its communion in consequence of its entire succumbency to State vassalage. He is the author of three works which I have in my possession. The first, in point of time, is a faithful representation of this condition of the church, and

* Essay, &c. pp. 170, 174, 175, 176.

contains the whole of the provisions of the constitution respecting the church of Vaud, with a lucid illustration of the evils arising from the operation of these statutory provisions. The second is a pungent but charitable "appeal to the conscience of the ministers of the national church," with an able exposure of the common and slender fallacies by which they too successfully attempt to reconcile their position with their duty. The third consists of a series of "Letters" published on the same occasion as that which produced the tracts of D'Aubigné, namely, the recent alterations in the constitution of Geneva, when it appeared to both these writers a noble opportunity was afforded to the Genevese of establishing entire ecclesiastical freedom, and of effectually protecting themselves from the approaching ascendancy of the Roman Catholics in that Canton, by promptly effecting a total separation of the Church from the State, and placing the support of all the churches on the same foundation—the voluntary contributions of their respective friends. These letters are published under the title of "Letters of an American," and contain statements of principles, and appeals to facts furnished by the example of America, with much eloquence and power. It might be interesting to give examples of the tone of this able and faithful christian minister; but I am unwilling unduly to extend the limits of this chapter. M. Burnier is to be regarded as a champion in the cause of christian truth and liberty, and a worthy fellow-worker with his distinguished associates in the same great cause, Vinet and D'Aubigné.

It cannot be supposed that such men have no associates in their opinions, no precursors, no concomitants, no followers. It seems to me, from all I have heard, that, next to the revival of christian truth, is the recovery of christian liberty becoming the question of the day in every land called christian on the European continent, except in these regions where mind is shackled, and men are mute, and that in Switzerland, in France, and even in Germany, it is commanding the interest of the most educated and devout of the people.

Influenced by the same convictions to which Vinet and Burnier have yielded, many excellent persons have left the communion of the church in Vaud, and are formed, in various parts of the Canton, into Dissenting churches. They have suffered much, and continue to suffer, on account of their separation. The following is Dr. Gaussen's allusion to these Dissenting brethren, with whom, and with whose cause, the Dissenters in this country cannot but cherish a cordial sympathy. "If we hold the opinion of the absolute independence of the Church, and its complete separation from the State, we must look to the consequence; and since, by our institutions and our laws, the Church of Geneva is national, in declaring ourselves dissentient we must found a new church. No one will dare to oppose any obstacle to this, in a happy country, where, for a long time, every citizen has the double right of examining the objects of his belief, and of professing it in peace. The Dissenters of the Canton Vaud have embraced this maxim, and believing themselves bound by it to

separate themselves from the national Church, they have freely founded new churches, and, from conscientious influence, they have not feared to suffer for a long time severe persecutions, for the maintenance of a principle which appears to them fundamental." *

I recur again to the tracts of D'Aubigné for a concise statement of the most recent evidence as to the state of opinion on the church question in Germany and Switzerland. After referring to the example of the United States of America, and to that of the English, that is, the British Dissenters, he thus introduces Germany and Switzerland:—"That land of ancient recollections, that conservative country, Germany herself, is making her voice be heard on this important question."

. A review, published by men whom public opinion on the Rhine regards as the most accredited organs in ecclesiastical matters, Drs. Luck and Giester of Gottingen, Nitzsch of Bonn, Ullmann and Umbreit of Heidleberg, proclaimed three months ago these grave opinions:—"The state of Protestantism in the centuries which have followed the Reformation, has marked the most dismal period of christianity, and the most foreign to the evangelical spirit. The Church lost her energy in consequence of her dependence on the State, and the growing secularization of her interests and her organs, which were its natural consequences." Dr. Ullmann says in another place, "The Church struggles even at this moment with an energy always increasing for the re-establishment of its independence,

* Lettres de M. Gaussen, pp. 44, 45.

and obtaining self-government for herself; and the combat becomes more serious every day."

After this allusion to Germany, Dr. D'Aubigné thus turns to Switzerland:—"We can easily understand that the absolute governments of Germany will attempt to dispute her liberty with the Church; and, nevertheless, they must one day grant it to her. The free people of Switzerland, will they suffer themselves to be outrun by the monarchs and princes of Germany? and for not having been willing to listen to American republicans, who have been speaking to us for nearly half a century, shall it be from these kings and these princes that we, we Swiss, shall one day be obliged to learn liberty? . . . The question approaches us every day. . . . The Committee of the Great Council of the Canton Vaud, charged with the consideration of the project of an ecclesiastical law, . . . say, in their Report of November, 1839, 'If we cast a look on the past and present state of society, we are convinced that the Church and the State tend more and more to separate. Who can deny the immense strides which have been made towards the separation of the civil from the religious society? Is it now time to retrograde, or even to stop? Your Committee, Mr. President and gentlemen, thinks not.'" "And why, then, has not this independence," Dr. D'A. asks, "been proclaimed among our neighbours? Here it is. 'It is necessary,' continues the Committee, 'to choose betwixt two systems, whether we ought to admit the separation full and entire of the two societies, in this sense, that the Church shall not receive its organiza-

tion from the law, and that its ministers shall not be paid by the State; then the Church will become a private society, protected no doubt like all other societies, but having no public and legal character. Or whether, if we acknowledge that the country is not ready to undertake this change, we are led to adopt the governmental system, that is to say, a state of things in which the Church is governed by the political powers, and in which ecclesiastical affairs become a branch of the administration of the State, if not altogether like the public works and forests, at least like public instruction. In this system the State has the high hand and supremacy over the Church; it is Bishop. An intermediate system is scarcely possible.' " * Strong indications these of a *transition state*! And it thus appears, that to such minds as those of D'Aubigné in the church, and of these shrewd statesmen in the educated Canton Vaud, the notion of the Church receiving State pay, and claiming exemption from State control, is an absurdity unworthy of regard. Before some minds the vision might flit for a season, but as a reality it can have no place with the disinterested and the wise. Place any church in such a position, and its insolence would soon be insupportable, alike by the government and the people.

While these important movements are going forward in Switzerland and Germany, it is interesting to notice that the same spirit is stirring in France, where the fatal effects of the dependence of the French Protestants

* Question de l'Eglise, pp. 57, 58.

on the State for their temporal support are felt the more severely the longer they are experienced. An eloquent writer, Dr. Scherer, has just appeared in Strasburg, of a kindred soul with his Swiss brethren, with whose work I am not yet any farther acquainted than by some extracts from it which recently appeared in a London Journal. The following are some examples of the spirit and power with which he writes, and present brief but interesting sketches of the mournful condition of the French Protestant Church. "But there has been not merely oppression; there has been substitution. 'The synods' (of the French church) being suppressed (by the State) the authority was left open—the place vacant for the first occupant. The State stepped in and took at once upon itself the ecclesiastical authority of which it had deprived the Church The State appoints the professors of Theology; decides on the conditions of aptitude required of candidates for the ministry; constitutes the Consistories; confirms the nomination of pastors; and, if it thinks proper, revokes them. In a word, it governs the Church This state of things is intolerable. Our Consistories, instead of being composed of Christians, known and approved by the flock, are formed of persons of note, who pay the mortgages. In our Theological Institution, orthodoxy and rationalism are taught indiscriminately. A professor without any control, and without violating any engagement, may overthrow revealed religion by criticism, and natural religion by speculation. The pastors enjoy the same latitude. Opposed to each other, the churches and the Consistories are, of course, in open

hostility. All this is ridiculous, is odious, but it is inevitable; and the institutions, and of course the doctrines, of our church are subverted. Deprived of all which made it a christian church, it has ceased to exist among other religious communities; its name remains, but it designates only a carcase, a phantom, or at best a remembrance, and a hope. Unhappily this is not all. The evil is not limited to the ruin of a religious society; it extends to the profession of Protestantism in France, and even embraces the destinies of christianity in our country. In losing its special, it has also lost its general character. I say it with sorrow; not only do we not form a Reformed church, but we do not form a church at all. We have no ecclesiastical institutions, no unity, no religious discipline, no official relations. The Consistory is only the fragment of a ruin; a fragment isolated without value or signification. The Consistories, and frequently the different churches of the same Consistory, are a prey to the most fatal discord. The pastors refuse to admit each other to the pulpit, anathematize each other," &c. To the question, What is to be done? he gives a long and eloquent reply, of which the following sentence is the conclusion:—"As a Christian and a believer, I want to see pernicious errors abandoned to their own nothingness; truth in possession of its right, which is independence, and of its forces which is dependence on its own resources."

From these statements it will also appear, that in the opinion of wise and good men on the Continent, there is a visible, and even a rapid tendency to the separation of the two powers. The alliance, once

strong, is now waxing weaker, and successive changes, preparatory to its dissolution, are now matter of history. What are those changes?

First,—there was the era of *exclusive and violent intolerance*, in which, it is true, Rome set the example, but which, unfortunately, the reformed churches, as soon as they could, were in haste to follow. This was the golden age of civil establishments of religion, the period of their perfection, power, and glory. In this era, the religion of the State was the only religion; the Church of the State the only church; toleration (to use their own chosen epithet) was intolerable; the Dissenter was a rebel against both ecclesiastical and civil authority, and the only regimen prescribed for him by the one or the other was violence. He must be fined, or imprisoned, or banished, or tortured, or hung, or drowned, or beheaded, or burned. This glory has departed! This age has passed, not, however, till it had soaked the earth with blood. It was its vocation, and it fulfilled it.

The age of toleration followed, in which that was at last done which Church and State could no longer help doing—in which men, long broken down and crushed by oppression, began to rise and help up one another, and gather some strength again, and breathe, and look rather significantly about them, in which they began to receive, and (fools that they were) were glad for the moment to accept, a liberty from their fellow-men to worship God as they chose. In various countries, toleration became more or less extensive and free.

The age of bribery has come. Retaining some one

sect in special alliance, States have begun to extend "side looks of love" to others, and to employ their gold to purchase their favour. They now pension those whom of old they persecuted, and whom, but of late, they could only tolerate; and as if they had become indiscriminate in this new affection—as if characters the most opposite were alike acceptable to them—as if all differences in creed or in morals were either fabulous or imperceptible, to pension nearly every sect that will consent to be pensioned. Thus France pays Protestants equally with Catholics. Geneva has her public funds for the Romish curé, as well as the Unitarian Presbyterian. Belgium is not less liberal. But *we* need not pass for examples into other regions. In this last effort to preserve ecclesiastical alliance, Britain has been first among the foremost; and, with great pecuniary liberality (for she has a prodigal passion for pay) she salaries Protestants and Papists, Maynooth and Oxford, Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists; nay, I am not sure but even Mahomedans and Hindoos share in Britain's bribing bounty.

Is any other expedient in contemplation? Is any other mutation yet in reserve? Is there any third term betwixt the two sides of the alternative—pay all, or pay none—which yet remains to be resorted to? Probably the last expedient is expended; and if bribery will not do, nothing now will. But will it do? When ancient Rome began to bribe her invaders, her fall was at hand; and her gifts were the means as well as the omens of her ruin. And all those shifts and

changes, all these successive expedients, are the attributes, not assuredly of the plans of the all-wise and immutable Jehovah, but of the ill-assorted inventions of erring, foolish, presumptuous man; and are recognized by all but the blind as the sure marks of things *which must be shaken and removed, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

And if there be any truth in the deep and solemn convictions of the Nonconformists and Dissenters in this empire, comprehending no small portion of the scriptural piety, the sober morality, and the sound sense of the land, convictions common to them and the American churches of every name,—that civil establishments of religion are not of God but of man, that they have served no good purpose even for the men of worth who have unhappily been induced to avail themselves of them, and that, in regard to others, they have served no purpose whatever so effectually as to supply a weapon to the persecutor, a name to the proud, money to the worldling, a soft couch for repose to the indolent and lazy, a useless rampart to the timid victim of false fears, that they have raised a frowning wall of separation betwixt a sect within and sects without, that they have shut up large portions of Christ's professed followers, like prisoners in some fastness, when they ought to have been free, and abroad in all directions, allaying strife, healing divisions, scattering the immortal seeds of heavenly truth and charity, and hastening to carry the tidings of mercy to a world that has not yet heard them; then verily, the nineteenth century will be illustrious, if it shall accomplish their

universal and final downfall. Nor can I more appropriately close these chapters than with those burning words of Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, addressed to his compatriots of Geneva: "Proclaim, then, Gentlemen, this grand principle of modern times, acknowledge the incompatibilities of the civil and the spiritual power, and their reciprocal independence. The peace of our country, the concord of citizens, the respect due to power, the liberty of conscience, the prosperity of our political institutions, the maintenance of order, the just partition of our public offices . . . the successive developments of humanity, all summon you to this grand and noble determination. Give a generous example. Take the initiative in one of the greatest works which are fallen to our times. Let the new Geneva find itself, like the ancient, at the head of one of those great movements which influence the destinies of humanity, and let somewhat of its ancient glory be restored to it. *The independence of the State and of the Church ought to be the Reformation of the nineteenth century* :—a Reformation at once Catholic and Protestant, monarchical and republican, moral and political. Happy the people who shall first encircle their head with this brilliant crown! If you grant this benefit to the country, the citizens will ratify it by their votes, and your descendants will bless you." *

* Question de l'Eglise, pp. 62, 64. The Dr. ought not to forget that the honour he desires for his country is beyond the reach of Geneva, or of any State in the old world. Already "this brilliant crown" is won and worn by young America.

APPENDIX.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of the following extract from my Journal, not remotely connected with "Geneva, its locality and vicinity," formed part of the first Address, when delivered. Other sketches of these attractive regions might have been added, such as of Berne, Lausanne, Neufchatel, Basle, and, perhaps, above all, the Val Moutier. But all these yield to the fascinations of the riches, beauty, and awful magnificence of the great central Alps. To these the following sketch is confined.

July 31.—I had agreed with a party of friends to visit the far-famed Mont Blanc. The hour fixed for starting was five A.M., and the condition of setting out was the weather. At five it rained, thundered, and flashed; but the postilion came to inquire. I sent him to Mrs. B., to fix with her and the ladies. Mrs. B.'s orders were to start at nine, if things improved. Things did not improve greatly; but at nine the voiturier came with his carriage, and after long consultation, we agreed to go forward, with some courage, but not much hope. Things did improve, however, insomuch that although it rained in somewhat of

Alpine style when we began to move, we were by and by in a condition to open the top of the carriage, and enjoy the view. It was indeed worth enjoying. We had left Protestant for Roman Catholic ground, a few miles out of Geneva, where we enter the Sardinian territory, and, with all formality, show our passports to an officer of his Sardinian majesty. The general aspect of our course was to this effect:—We rode along, amidst small but rich fields, a great abundance of vineyards, and occasionally poor-looking villages; having on our right the torrent of the Arve, sometimes spreading out to great width; beyond the Arve, a vast sloping table land, apparently all cultivated and richly wooded, very like some English landscape: on the left, at a considerable distance, a lofty sloping ridge, having *chalets*, (farm-houses of wood, with roofs almost flat, and large projecting eaves,) and small fields and vineyards around them, to the very top; while in front is a bold range of Alpine mountains, with countless inlets, conical peaks, abrupt perpendicular precipices, woods running up almost to the summits, and (which is peculiarly striking to the British eye) having frequently cultivated patches in the bosoms of those woods, above them, and up to the bottom of the loftiest peaks. The Mole, a beautiful conical mountain, (5,800 feet in height,) stands in advance of this ridge; and leaving it on our left, we wheel into a true Alpine defile of a good many miles in length, winding perpetually, our impetuous friend the Arve always near us—the valley sometimes so narrow as to leave little more

than a bed for the river, while the banks on each side present every conceivable variety of rock, wood, glen, cascade, &c. Of the height of these mountains we could pronounce nothing from observation, the Alpine clouds and rains having revisited us as we entered the pass, and they did not afterwards withdraw altogether for the evening. We drove into the yard of the inn at St. Martin, glad to enter it, dingy and noisy though it was. I was sent to what was deemed an excellent bed-room, in which I found damp bed-clothes, covering a bed of rushes or straw, yet very elastic, and by no means disagreeable. About sunset, the clouds ascended, and, in some quarters, opened a little, by which we perceived that the valley was here considerably wide, the mountain sides like gardens for cultivation, and the *chalets* in all directions, almost to the summit, and very picturesque. We saw also, now and then, among the clouds, or over them, some summit or cliff, disclosed for a moment, and then veiled again, that let us imagine amidst what grandeur we were placed, and what we might see to-morrow, should these clouds disperse. We were also pointed to the direction in which Mont Blanc lies, and told that from the bridge on which we stood, one of the finest views of the mountain is had in clear weather! But in place of the mountain, we saw only common-place clouds. We went to bed early, to rise at five, and start at six.

Aug. 1.—We did rise at five, but did not start at six; for the weather in the morning was just as it had been in the evening, cloudy, without rain, and clouds forming before our eyes on the mountain sides, spread-

ing out into every variety of form, sometimes twisting like thin smoke around a mountain pine, as if it were burning, &c. But it was not to see clouds we came, and it was not till after long consultation that we agreed to go on. Our path was at first level, on the one side of the broad valley, which, however, was plainly verging to some other mountain gorge. Meanwhile our prospects improved, and our spirits rose; the clouds were getting thin; here and there the welcome azure was showing itself, and gleams of sunshine were revealing objects in all directions, long before noon. While we were gazing on some summit just becoming visible here, another was coming out there, and our heads were kept in a perpetual rotatory, making new discoveries every instant, till a whole panorama of new objects—cliffs, ravines, castellated-looking summits, woods, cataracts, glens, surrounded us. We soon came to the end of our level; we passed through a miserable looking village, and right up the face of the mountain, by a rough and narrow path, winding amidst the finest highland woodlands. I was amazed at the rapidity with which we rose, the tops we had looked up to a couple of hours before being now scarcely above us, until we found ourselves the near neighbours of these mighty eminences, and saw quite at hand the deep ravines which torrents and avalanches had ploughed in their sides, the deep green forests which they bore, and the rich verdure with which lofty patches were adorned. Our sky improved so much that we rejoiced we had come on, and we looked eagerly towards *the mountain*. At last, when we were getting near a

halting place, some 4000 feet above the level of the sea, snows in our immediate vicinity, and a stupendous breastwork of naked rock frowning over us, with another and steeper pass before us, the cloud looked thin and bright, masses of seemingly new driven snow appeared among the clouds, and in a few minutes, as we looked, not a cloud rested on *the mountain*, its awful summits stood naked before us; and, although at least ten miles off, it seemed so near as to be within a gunshot. I never can forget that spot;—its rude inn—its cabinet of curiosities—its chapel—its grim priest looking at us from a window—the plot of beautiful lawn, even at so great an elevation—its stupendous mountain barrier—above all, *the mountain* itself, the very Mont Blanc, seen towering above all majestically. Through that pass we travelled, which of itself is worthy of being visited, and, indeed, forms a fit approach to the chief physical grandeur in Europe. The principal feature of this pass is the steepness of its wooded banks. The Arve is seen like a silvery fluid at the bottom, and although you are sometimes fully one thousand feet above it, you might, in some places, toss a stone into the stream without touching the sides. The opposite side is covered with pines. As we descend from this gorge, and wind to the left, we enter a deep and long valley, a stream winding through it—several villages scattered in it—vast glaciers descending on one side to the very valley—these *chalets* every where—woods ascending the mountain sides, and closing up the valley at its upper extremity. This is Chamouni! Along this valley we hurried, and reached, ere noon,

the comfortable Hotel de Londres; Mont Blanc, without a cloud, appearing before us in all his glory.

The appearance of this vast mountain range may soon be given. The mountain side, beneath the region of snow, is *not one* sloping bank. Torrents and avalanches have cut and cleft it deeply. The beds of most of these are naked and stony, but their sides, and the whole space between them, are covered with grass or pines, and resemble vast buttresses, applied for the support of the stupendous mountain mass. The summit is dome-shaped, covered with an enormous load of snow, which descends far, and fills gorges of the mountain, in some cases down to the valley. Besides this dome, there are many scarcely inferior eminences, and especially rocky peaks, shooting up in every form, like hardy guards of the monarch of mountains. In clear weather, such as we had, their peaks appear quite at hand, in some places as sharp as a spear; and enormous blocks of rock upon them, seem small stones, which workmen or boys, for frolic, have placed there incautiously, which the first high wind will certainly displace. Two large glaciers come down to the valley, of which the one is the famous "Mer de Glace." It is many miles in length, and here, about two in breadth, and looks as if a vast cataract of ice, in enormous blocks, were discharging itself into the valley.

The day was so fine, and so inviting, that we resolved to improve it by attempting one of "the sights." The "Montanverd" or green mount, is a shoulder of Mont Blanc, which overhangs the Mer de Glace, and has its

name from its appearance, being almost covered over with grass and low flowering shrubs, "the rose of the Alps." I was little aware of the nature of the excursion, otherwise it is questionable whether my courage, or sense of duty, would have permitted me to undertake it. Off we set, however, on mules, five of us having a guide each, who, if you will, keeps close by the head of the mule, and holds in his hand a thong attached to the bridle. We crossed the valley in a row, very Arabian-like, I suppose, and forthwith ascended the mountain. Nothing surprised me so much as the path itself, so narrow, so steep, so stony, that I could not have thought any loaded quadruped would have been suffered to attempt it. One while we were winding our way through the forest—another, crossing the dry bed of some torrent, or the path of some avalanche, the track of which, full three thousand feet above the valley, was sufficiently marked by the displaced soil, pines broken and strewn, and fragments of stones of all sizes. We soon gained a great height, on paths so narrow that the guide and mule could not always go abreast. Yet, had the mule slipped, or the stone or soil on which he trode given way, nothing whatever could have prevented the fall of the beast and his rider to the valley below. I often could not look down, and was glad for relief to keep my eye turned toward the mountain side above me. When we reached the summit the view was awful and sublime. The point at which we stopped is the site of "the Hotel de Mont Blanc," a plain but well built small structure, where travellers find shelter and refreshment, and have a copious supply of Alpine

curiosities offered for sale. From this pinnacle you look down on the valley, which appears like a beautiful garden far under you—the opposite mountain range, with its peaks and pines and snows rises like a huge wall; but all this is forgotten when contrasted with that mighty inlet on the range of Mont Blanc, at the bottom of which rests the Mer de Glace. It is nearly a circle of colossal pinnacles, overlaid with eternal snow, wherever there is as much plain or sloping surface as to afford place for snow to lie on, but many of which approach so much to the perpendicular as to be dark naked stone. The Mer de Glace, where we see it, is six thousand feet above the level of the sea; and one of those conical peaks is thirteen thousand, the greater portion of its side being bare rock. These aerial looking elevations are of every shape—and when the eye sweeps over the whole range, the mind is awe-struck, oppressed, and overwhelmed. Assisted by our guides, each having a stick with a spear in it, we went down the short declivity, and stepped a little way on this sea of ice. It consists of huge blocks, the chasms betwixt which show the most beautiful azure, but yawning openings, which it is perilous to approach. One looks with amazement over the whole scene, and cannot help exclaiming, “How dreadful is this place!”

Aug. 2.—Another cloudless day, and this beautiful and magnificent valley is seen in all its advantages. The younger members of the party have gone to Flegere, an eminence on the side of the valley opposite to Mont Blanc, still more lofty than Montanverd, and as difficult of ascent. Mrs. B. and I, with her youngest

son, remained at the hotel, contenting ourselves with a walk of three hours. New objects, or new views of objects, of beauty and magnificence, met us at almost every step. I was particularly struck with the huge and wide-spread masses of *debris* brought down by the torrents and avalanches, and the size of the stones swept down. Yet the powers of vegetation soon cover these desolations. The guide assured us that one field of ruin over which we passed had been effected within the last five years. Yet grass was appearing; and it seemed already like a nursery of young pines. We visited a waterfall of great height, which discharges itself into a sort of deep cup in the rock, a good way above the ground, and is immediately thrown out with such violence as to become a grand and beautiful jet. Stones are brought over with the water, rattle into the cup, rise with the jet, and descend with violence among the stones below. Although almost on a level with the valley, an old dirty avalanche lies here, and the water of this cataract, soon after it falls, flows under it for a considerable space. The heat was intense. In the evening clouds gathered rapidly—the mountain was soon hid—sheet lightning filled the valley—the flashes became incessant—we had an Alpine thunder storm—and the rain descended in torrents. So that we have been privileged to witness this scene in much variety of aspect.

Aug. 3.—Incessant rain—mountains hid—in the house all day—nothing to do but to write this journal. Under the head of *miscellanies* I may note the following things.—Immediately on entering Savoy we

remarked the inferior condition of the inhabitants—worse clothed, worse lodged, dirty. In the town of *Cluses*, through which we passed, their appearance was almost hideous. The town is built in one of the narrowest parts of the ravine, the houses being apparently attached to the rock; and were we to judge of the people from their appearance, I should say the women are hideous—the men bandits. *Goitre* seems very prevalent wherever we have been. The children, and even many of the old people, seem bred beggars, running after the visitors every where, soliciting. They bring you little bunches of strawberries on the stalk, bunches of wild flowers, or a few pebbles from their hills or brooks, for which they expect some small coin. The women bring milk in the same way. Mendicity and greed are thus nursed, almost as much as in Ireland. The tokens of their superstition are every where. A cross stands in some conspicuous place; the churchyards are filled with crosses. In the valley of Chamouni I saw two rude stone enclosures, about two or three feet high, with a piece of glass as a window; within the one was a figure of the Mother and Child; within the other, the figure of an old man, holding across his knees the image of a dead Christ, wretched red daubs marking the wounds on the head, hands, side, and feet. The poor people cross themselves as they pass these things, yet we durst not here give a tract. I said a very little to my guide. O what a dreary region morally considered! When will the light of the gospel cheer this land!

A very remarkable feature of the scenery consists in the bells used. Many of the draught horses have bells attached to their necks. Here, every cow has her bell, and every goat on the mountains. Day and night you hear these bells. All along the mountain side these bells are going. The goats with their bells are very striking objects;—their shaggy hair—their clean healthy look—the eager intelligence of their eye—their walking on the tips of rocks, and on the lower branches of trees—and their rush down the mountain side on their way home. With two things I was disappointed—reality falling below anticipation. The one was the size of the pines, which did not at all realize the descriptions I have so often read of the grandeur of Alpine forests. They are very abundant and very pretty, and they climb up the mountain sides to a great height, in some places to at least seven thousand feet above the sea level, but I never saw them very thick or lofty, and, as might be expected, they become abundantly slender, in proportion as they approach the region of perpetual sterility and winter. But one cannot but admire the disposal of their roots. They often grow amidst masses of stones; and there, the manner in which the roots are twisted, and in which they bind themselves around the stones—the thickness and strength which these roots acquire—the constancy with which new fibres come forth, and pierce crevices, and form new bindings—the extent to which, for security and nourishment, the tree is thus tied and bound—are very remarkable. It looks as if the tree had intelligence, knew both its advantages and its dangers,

and with sturdiness and ingenuity combined, availed itself of its knowledge, and made the best of its position. And there is an intelligence which presides over these hills and forests, as over every other department of creation, and these are some of its manifold indications. The finger of God is there.—The other was the thunder storm. Perhaps I never saw as much lightning in one night, and scarcely at any time in larger volume and more dazzling brightness. Even in the public room, which was well lighted with candles, and on the hearth of which a fire of wood was blazing, the flashes seemed to fill every window, to come around every one of us, and play betwixt us and our plates; and when I was in bed, with my eyes shut, I perceived one flash through the transparency of the eye-lid, which was instantly followed by the loudest crash we heard. Yet the roar of the thunder was not so vast, nor so prolonged; it did not shake the mountain; even the house did not shake: and I think I have frequently heard thunder as grand. But it was “the voice of the Eternal;” it was “the God of glory who thundered” in those heavens; and it was enough to inspire admiration and awe. I may remark, that the lightning came from many points, and, consequently, “many thunders” were heard simultaneously; ere one, in one direction, was silent, another flash and another thunder occurred in another direction, and others in others. I know not how many mountains and peaks had thus each his own voice—his own “tongue of thunder.”

Aug. 4.—We intended to have gone to-day to Mar-

tigny, and on Saturday to proceed to Villeneuve, and return to Geneva that evening by the steamer. But the morning was still wet and unpromising; and as the journey to Martigny must be performed on mules, a ride of eight hours, the undertaking was out of the question. We returned to Geneva by the way we came, leaving the beautiful, the magnificent Chamouni for ever. It was not without regret that I bade a final adieu to this enchanting scene, replete with the wonders of the Almighty. "This land of Alp and lake is, indeed, a mountain temple reared for the human mind on the dull unvaried plains of Europe, to which men of every country resort, from an irresistible impulse to feel intensely, at least once in their lives, the majesty of nature. The purest of intellectual enjoyment that the material world can give is being alone in the midst of this scenery."

"Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains,
They crowned him long ago,
On a throne of rocks, with a robe of clouds,
And a diadem of snow."

Sinai and Horeb have associations infinitely more instructive and sacred; but I question whether that solemn vale on which the tribes stood, and over which the precipices of Horeb impended, had any thing physical, more majestic, awful and sublime, than the breast of Mont Blanc, his hoary head, and his countless pinnacles far above the eagle's flight, than the awful rocks that environ the Mer de Glace, than the assemblage of grandeur in the valley of Chamouni.

Yet I hope I left that spot, never to be forgotten while memory remains, with gratitude, that I had been permitted to behold these works of the Lord—that I had seen them in circumstances so very favourable—that the slightest disaster did not occur to any of the party—and that I had the happiness of being associated in my visit with some of the excellent of the earth.

“ But farewell, glorious Chamouni,
Thou monarch Mount, farewell !

We travel to a better land,
Where joys immortal dwell.”

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